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# BOOK OF ORNAMENTAL DESIGNS.

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Samuel Leith
III

# The Tradesmans book of Ornamental Designs.

LONDON

GEORGE VIRTUE, IVY LANE, PATERNOSTER ROW.

NK1535
L45

TO THE HONOURABLE

# THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR MANUFACTURES

ETC. ETC.

# IN SCOTLAND

This Work on

# ORNAMENTAL DESIGN

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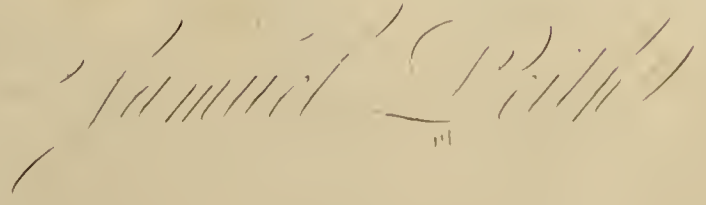

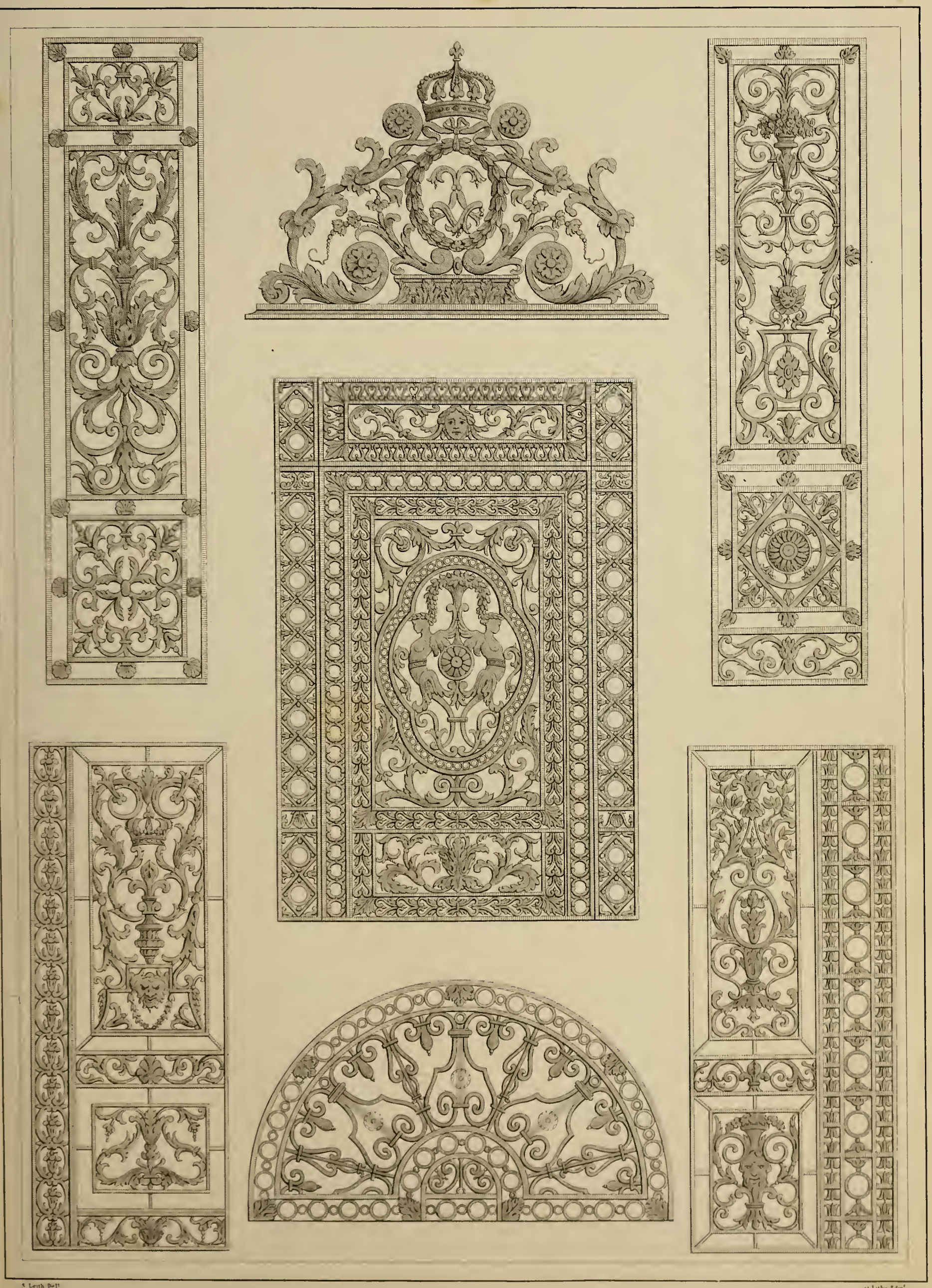

S. Leith Del.t

et Litho Edin.r

IRON WORK.

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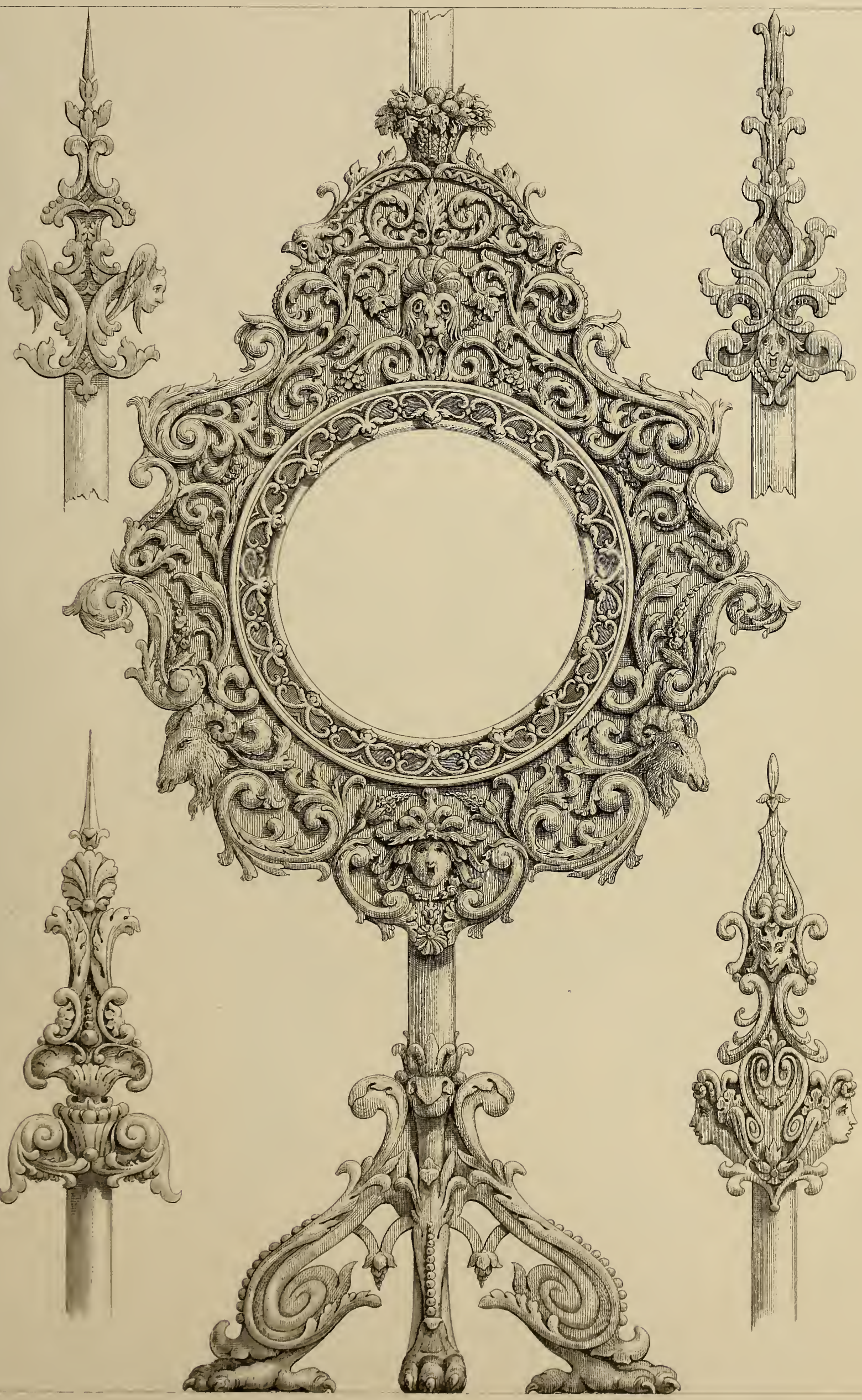
ORNAMENTAL PERFORATED RAIL—ITALIAN.

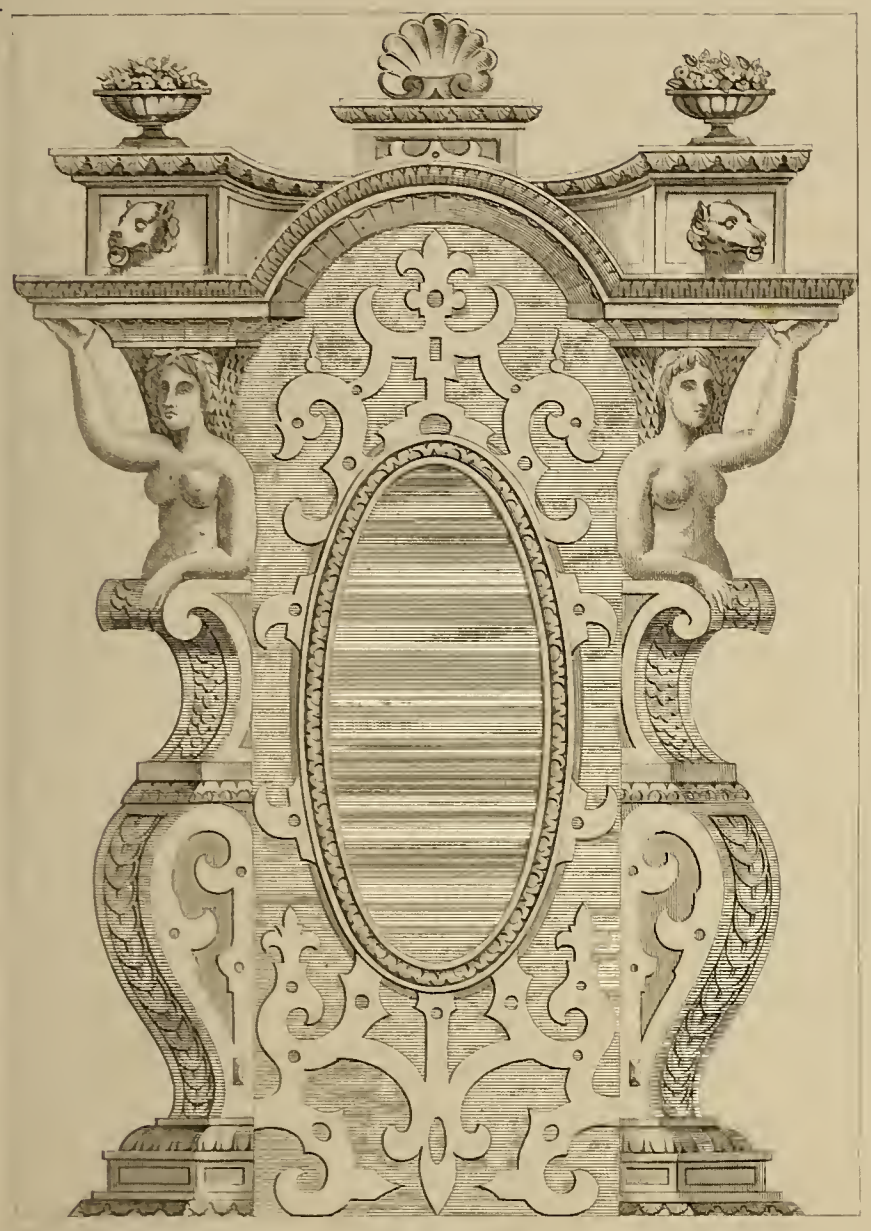


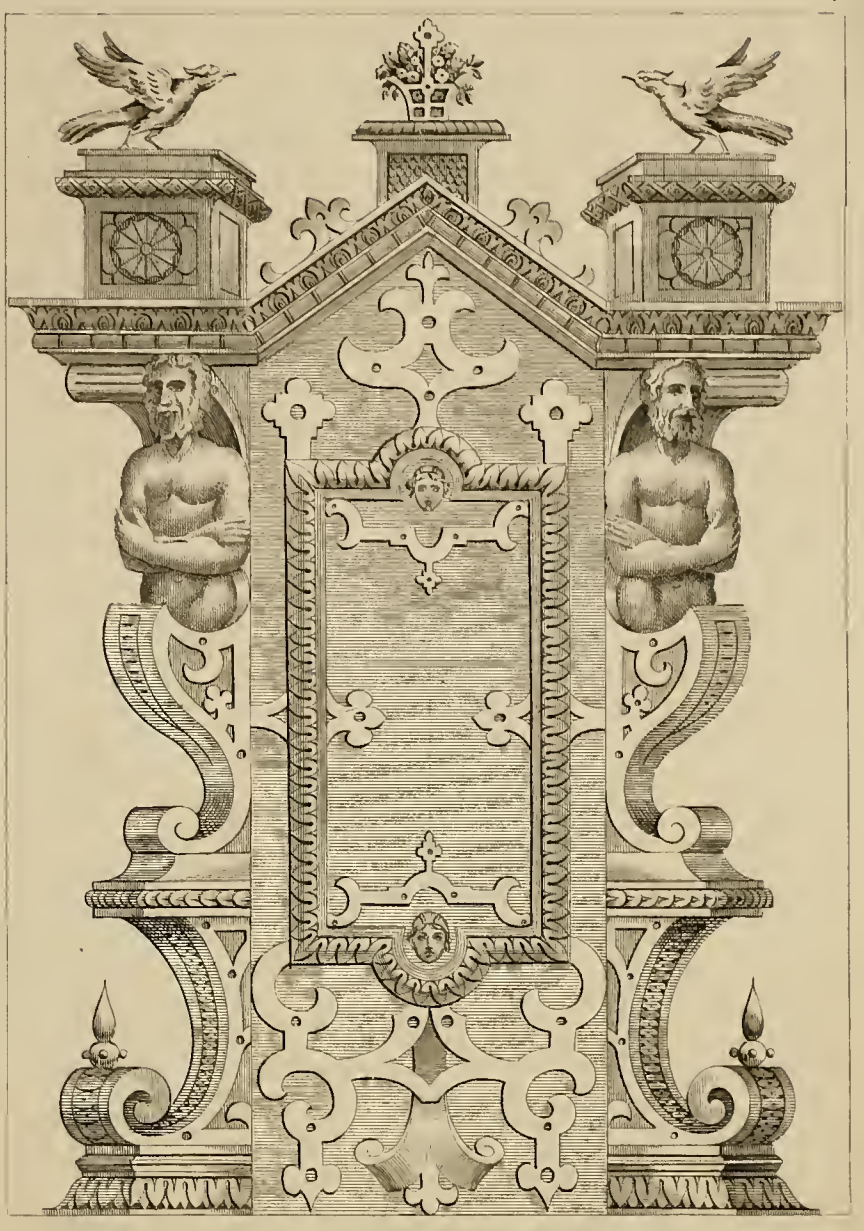
FLEMISH.

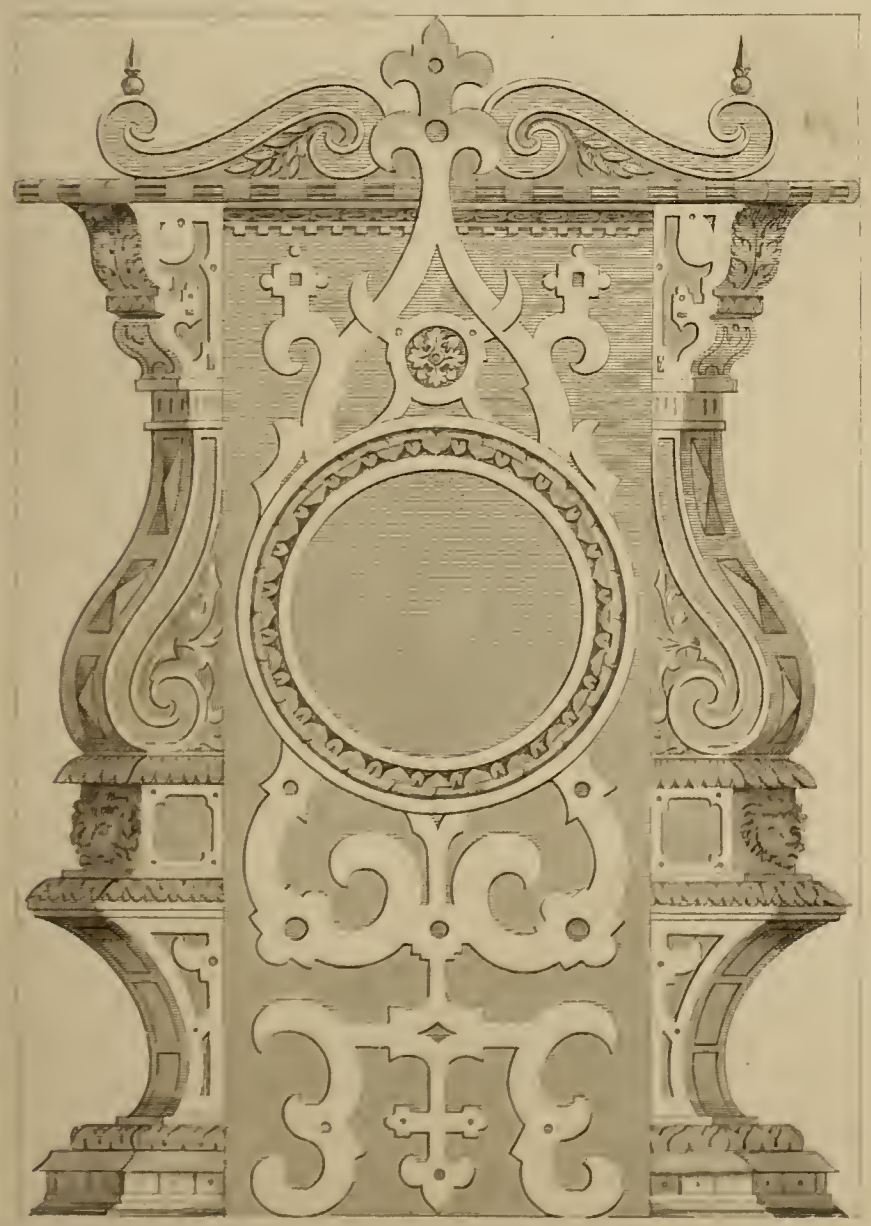
*From a Rare Etching by Guido Reni after Lucas Cambiaso*

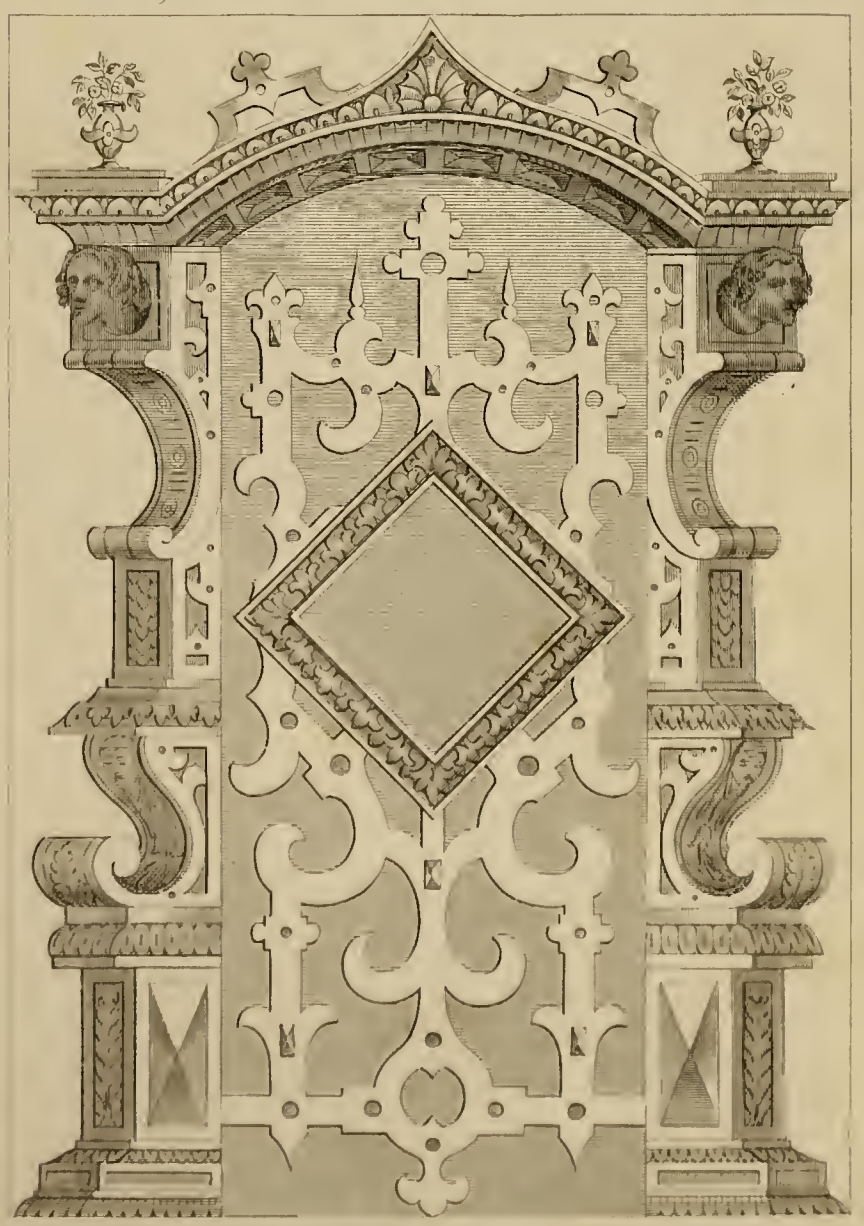
ITALIAN

IRON GATE — GRECIAN

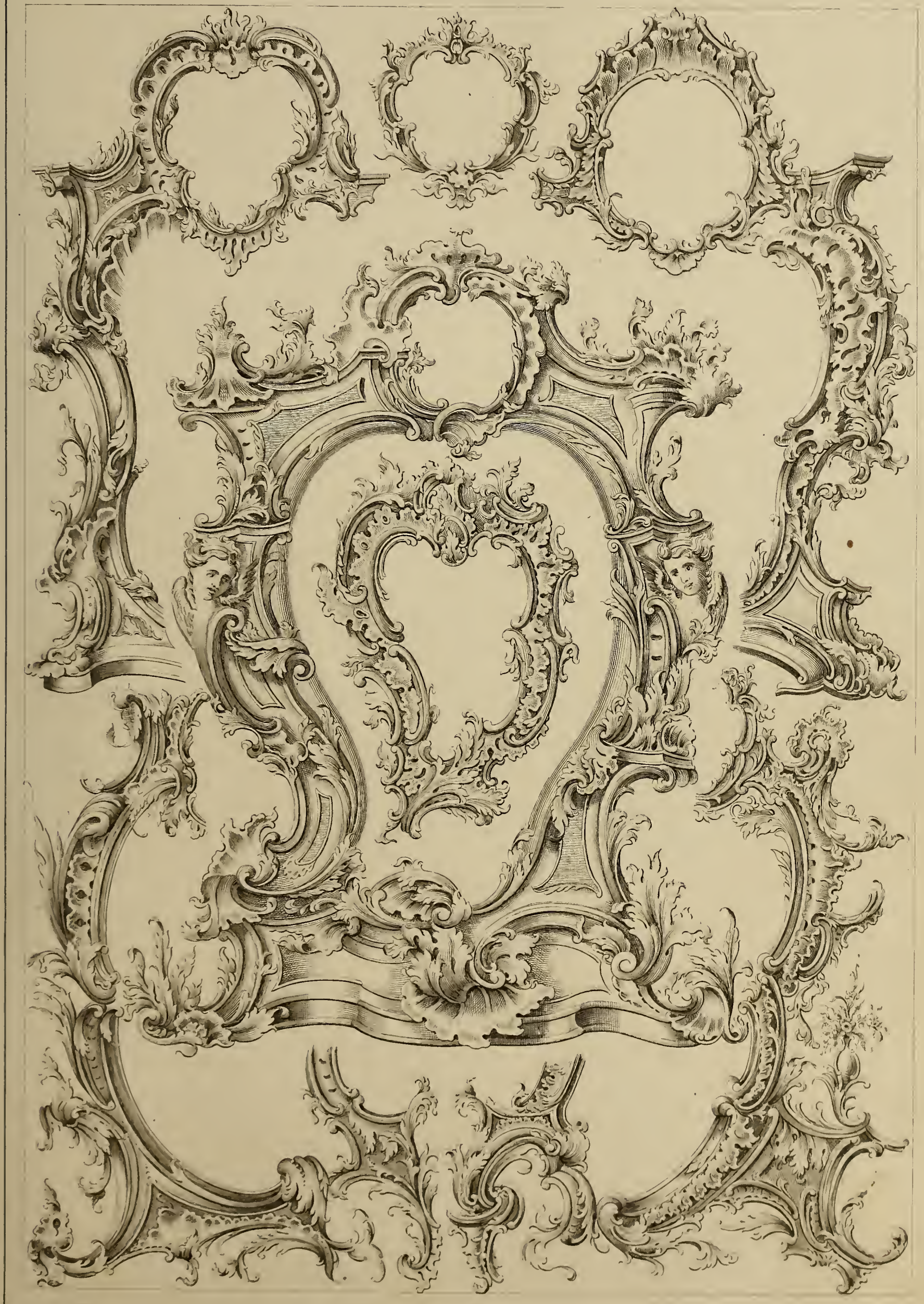








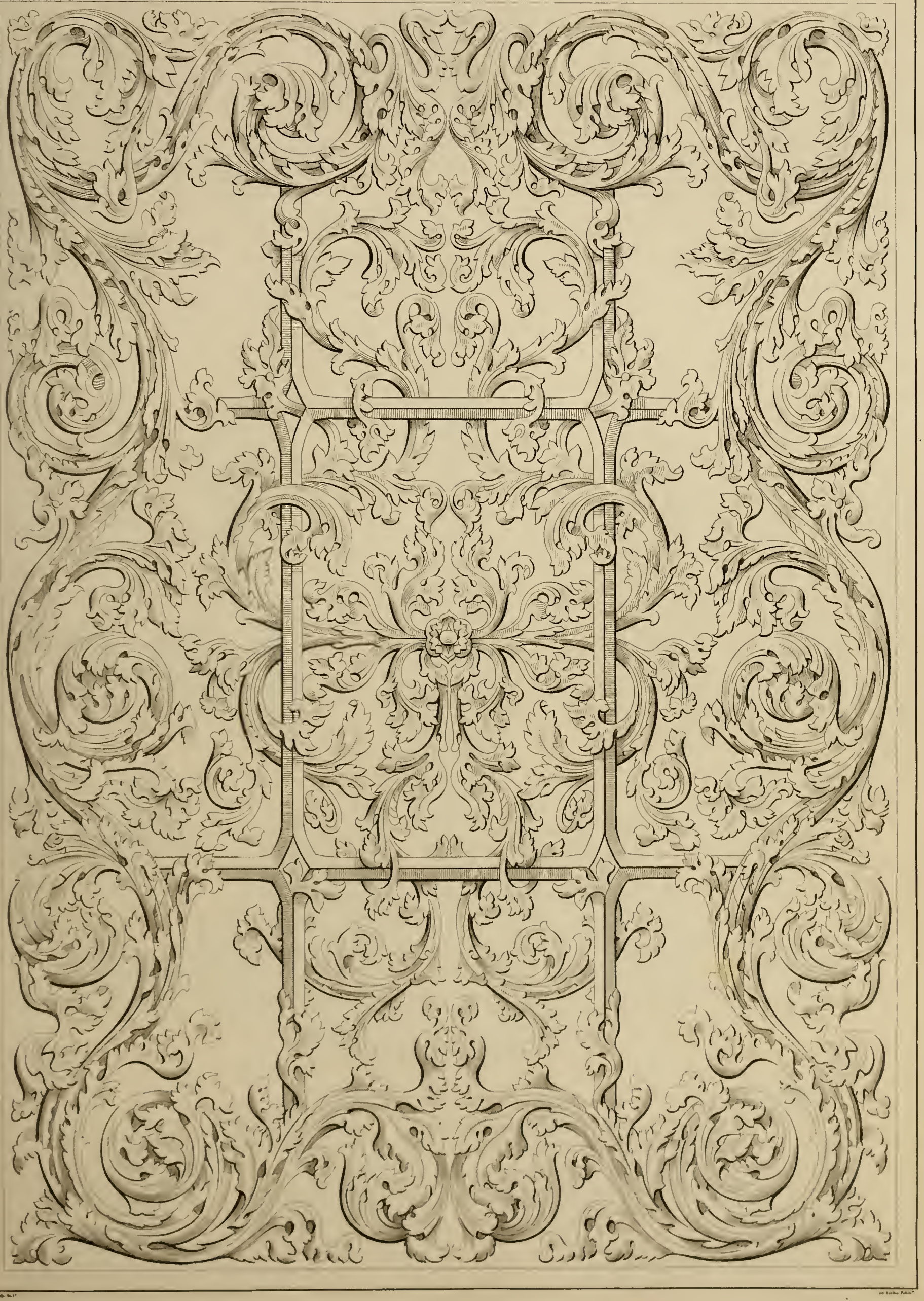
PANNELS – ELIZABETHAN



S. Leath Del

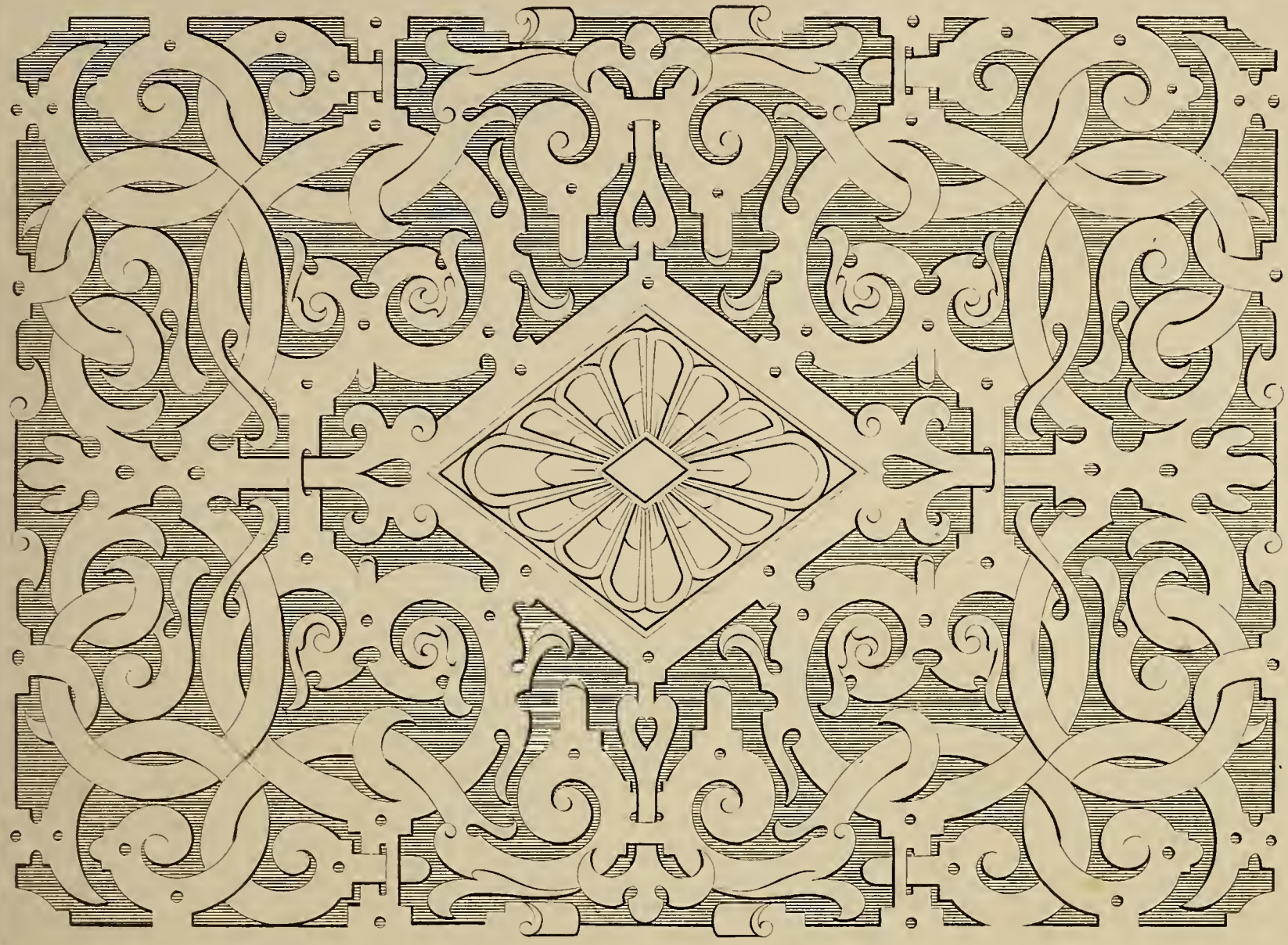
et Lithn Edinr

LOUIS QUATORZE.



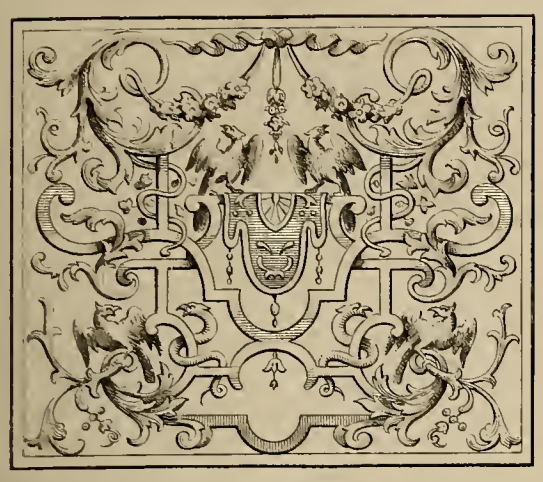
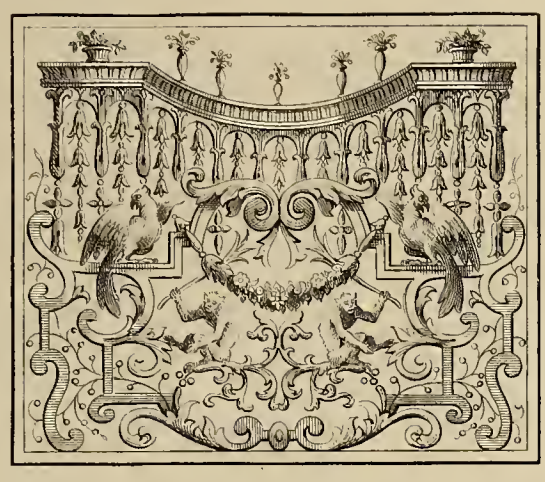
SCROLL &c - GOTHIC.

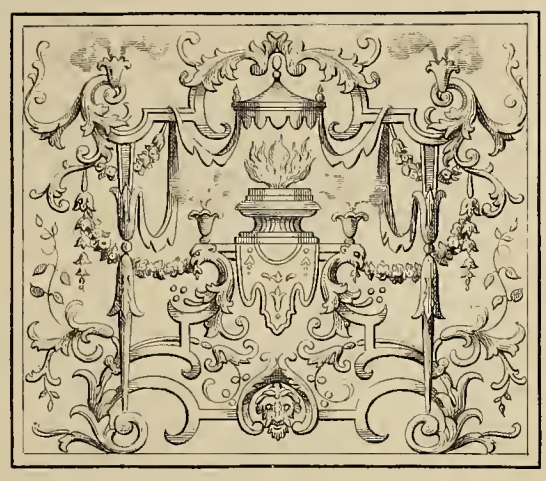
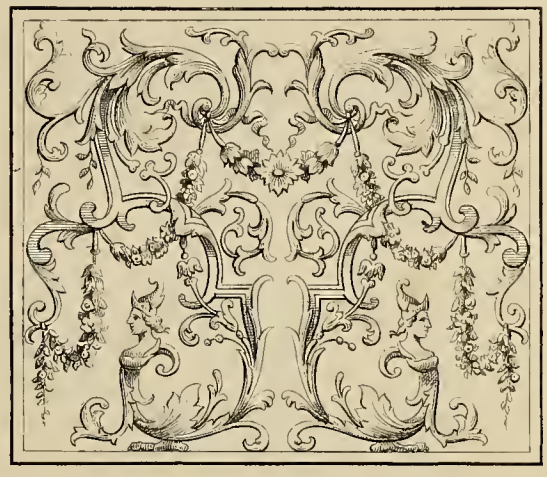
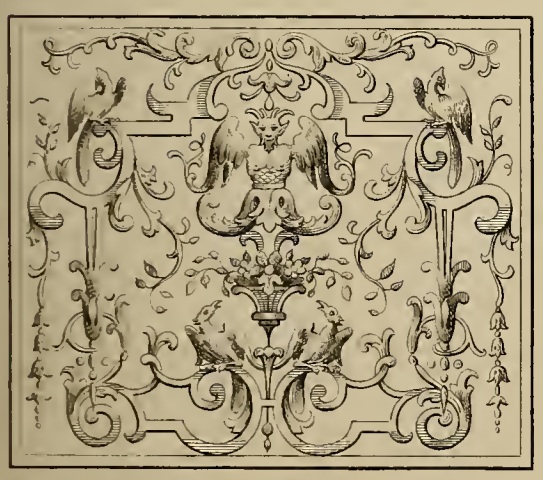
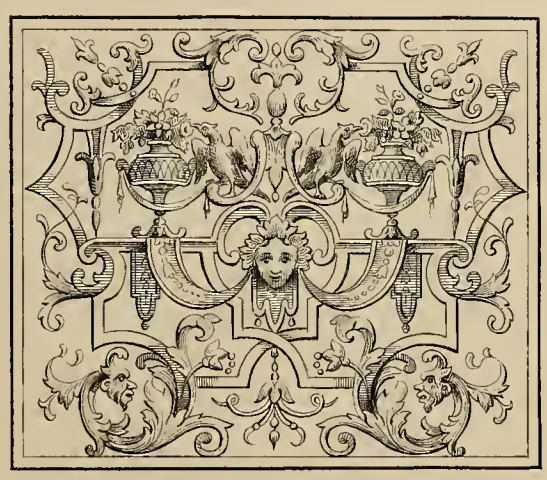
LAMPS &c – ROMAN.

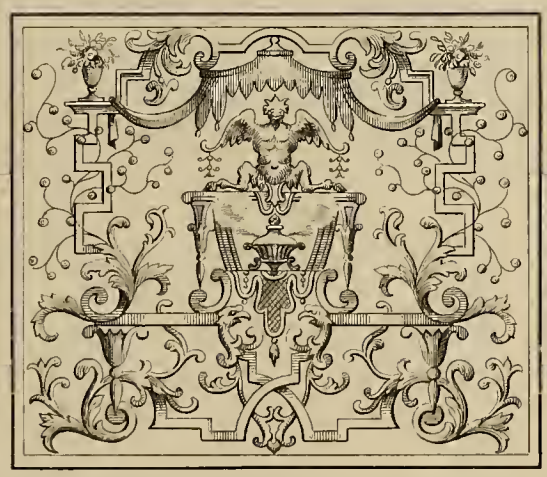


CEILINGS - ELIZABETHAN.

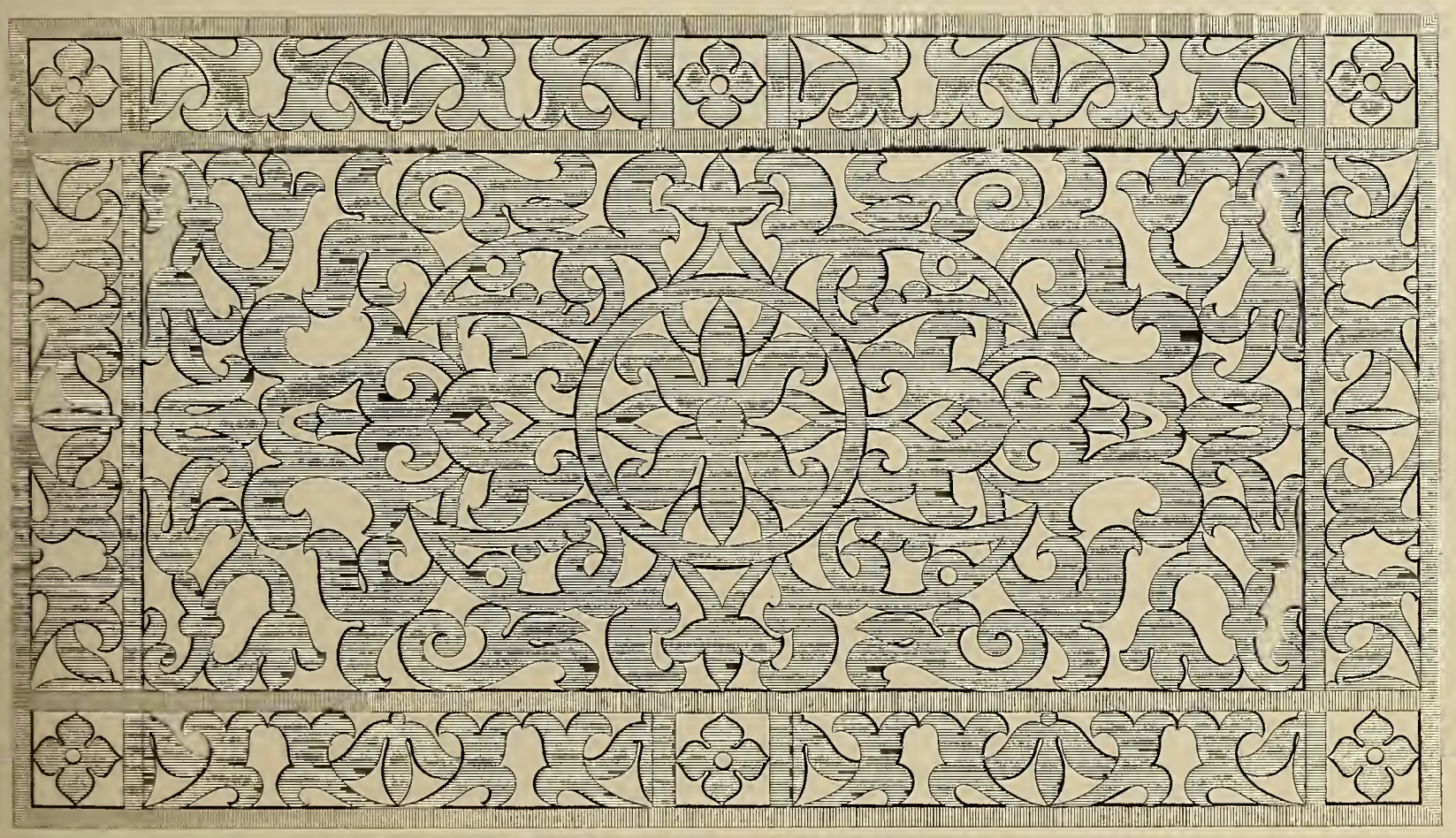
ALHAMBRA—BOOK COVER

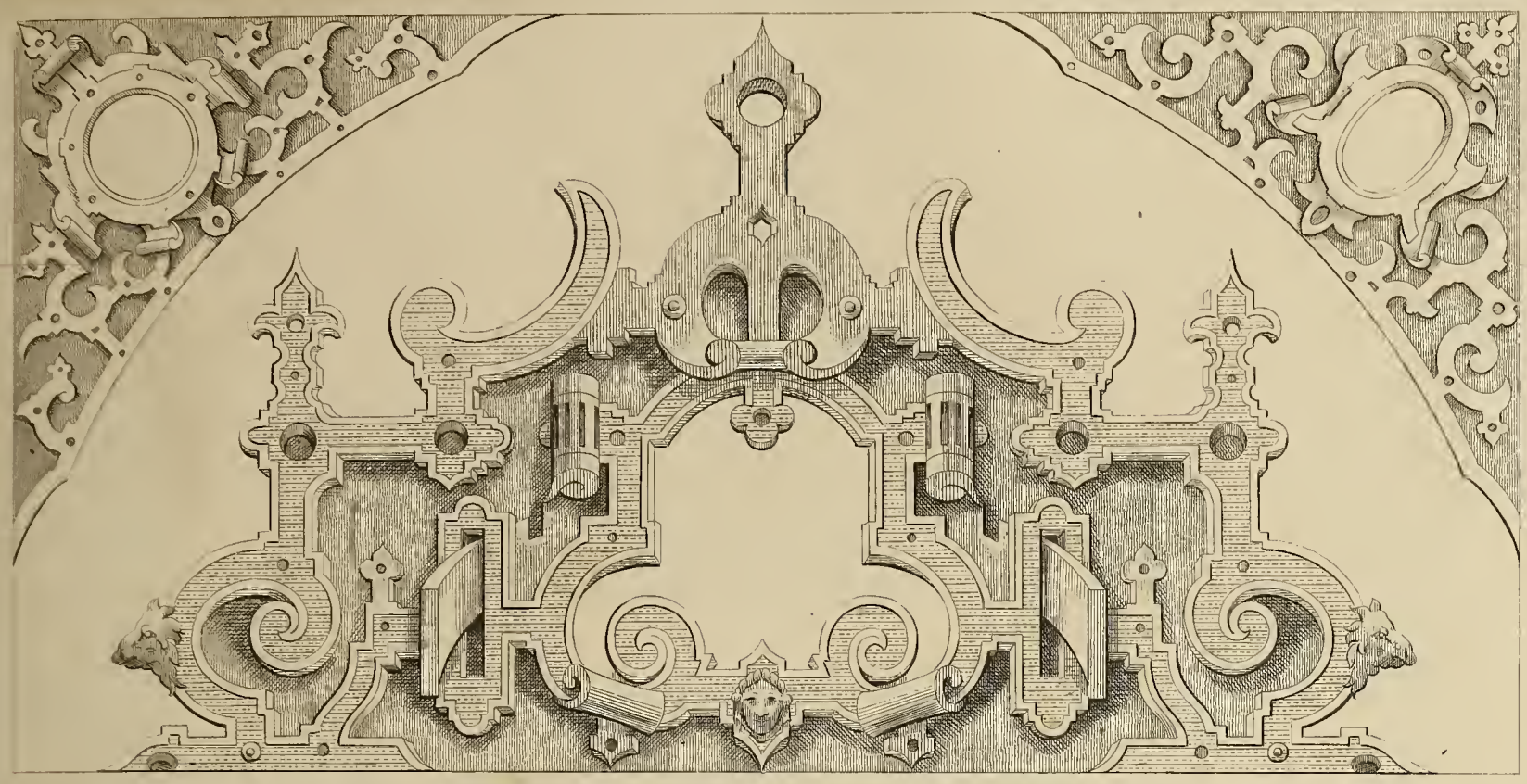





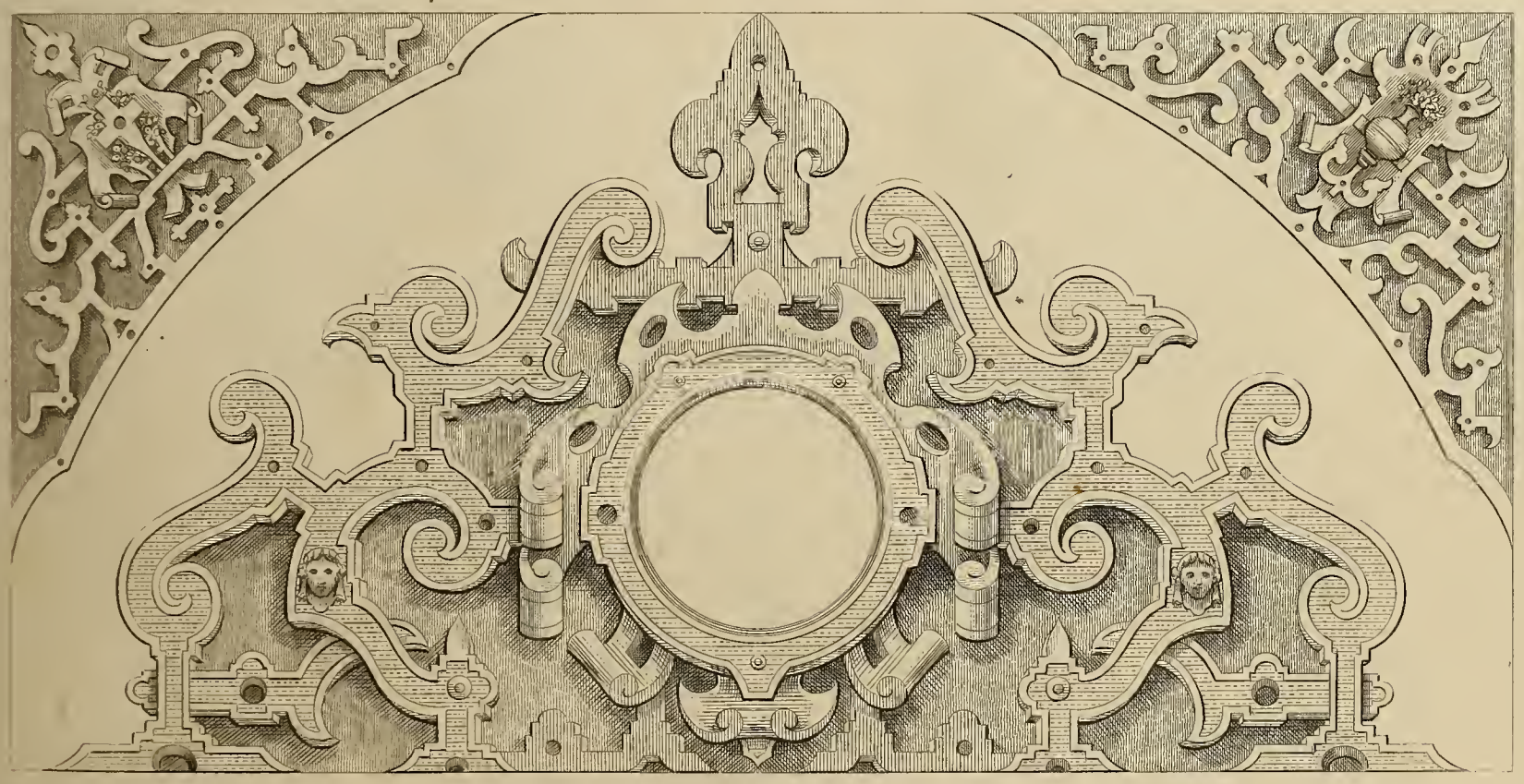


ARABESQUES.

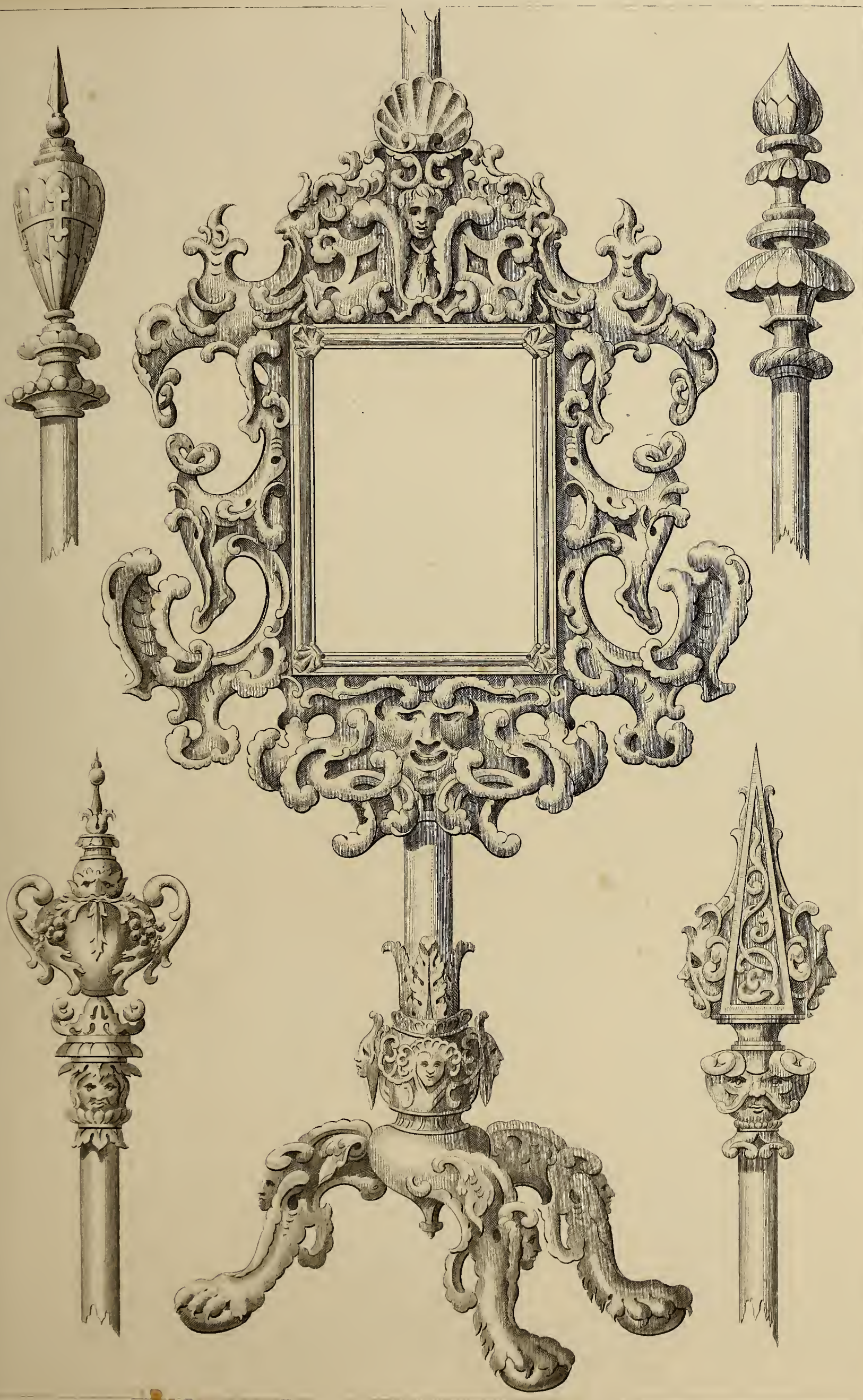


PERFORATED RAIL.- ALHAMBRA



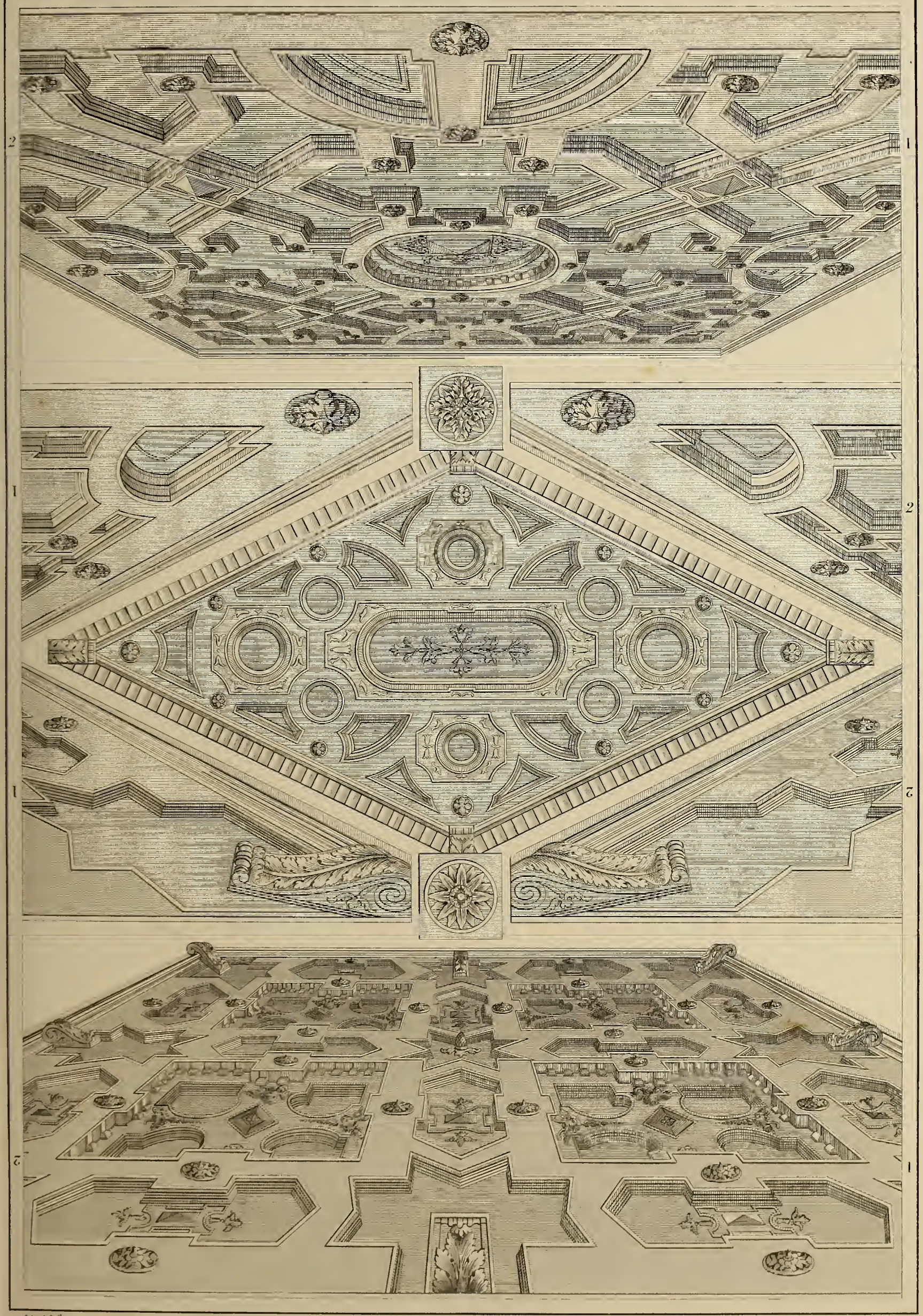


WINDOW HEADS &c.- ELIZABETHAN.



FIRE SCREEN.- GROTESQUE

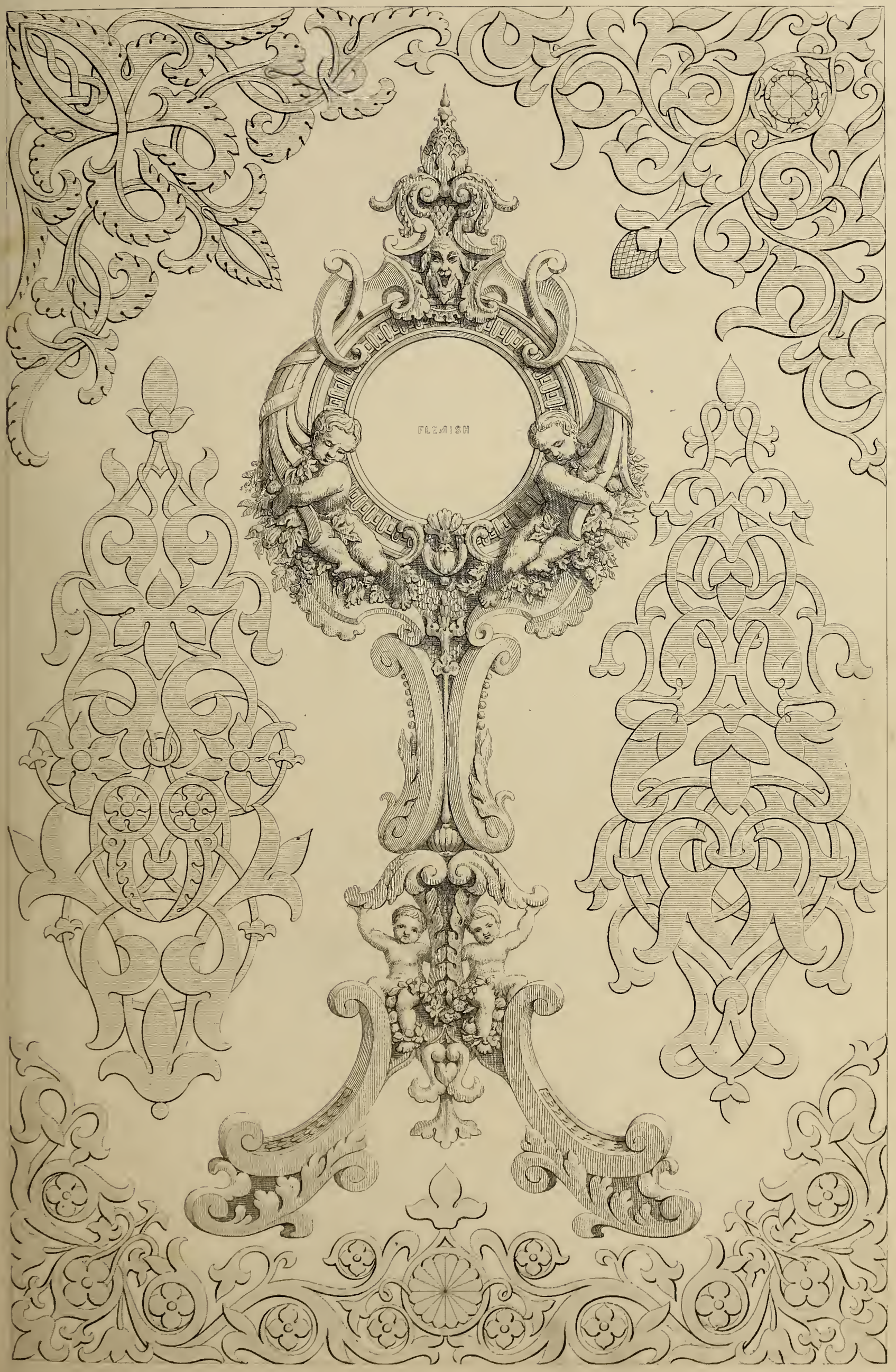
PAPER HANGINGS. – ARABESQUE.



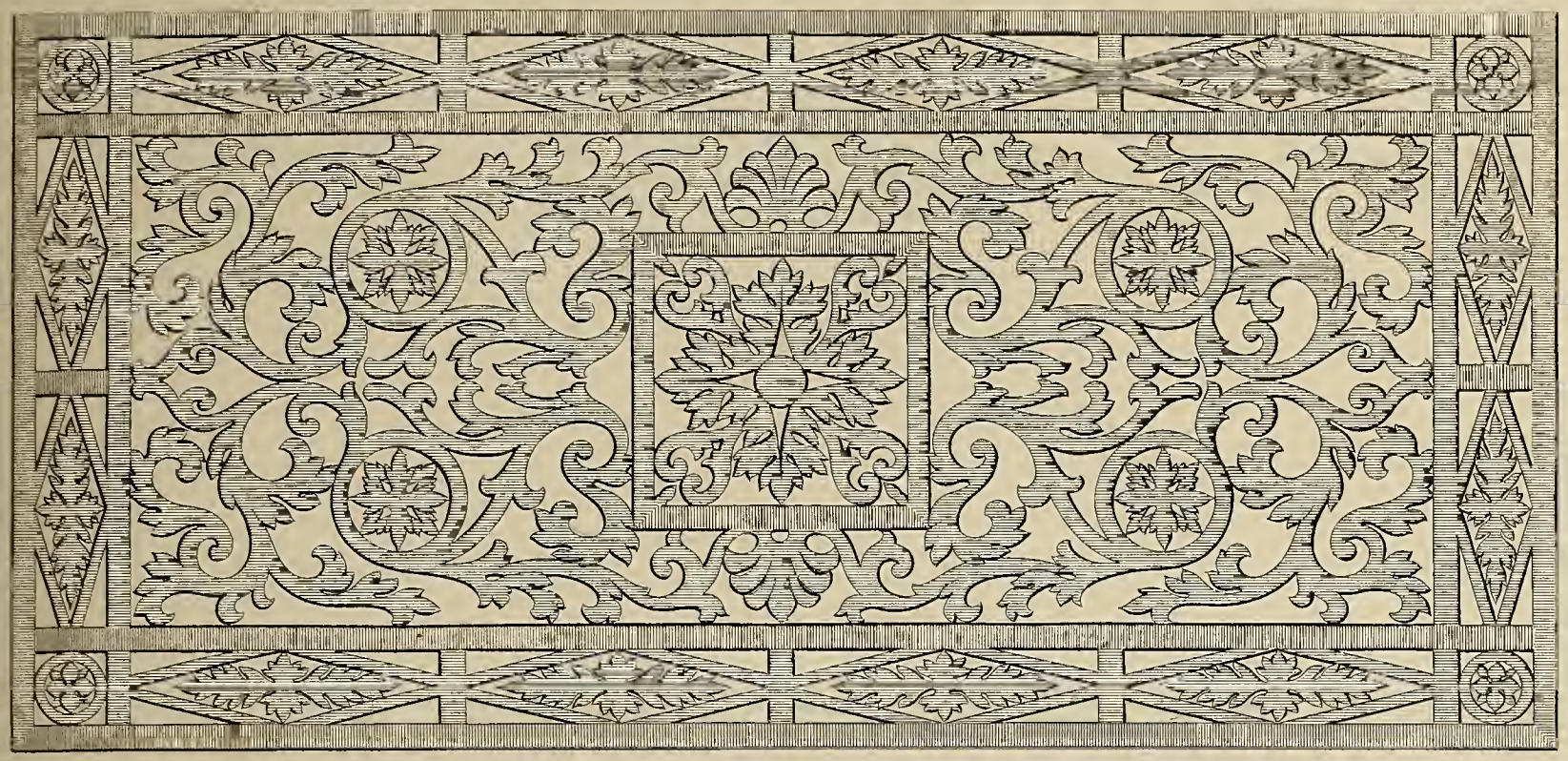
CEILINGS.—ITALIAN.

BOOK COVER - FLEMISH

INTÊRIOR DECORATION. — FRENCH.




MOORISH AND FLEMISH.



PERFORATED RAIL. – GRECIAN

TRELLIS WORK.-GOTHIC

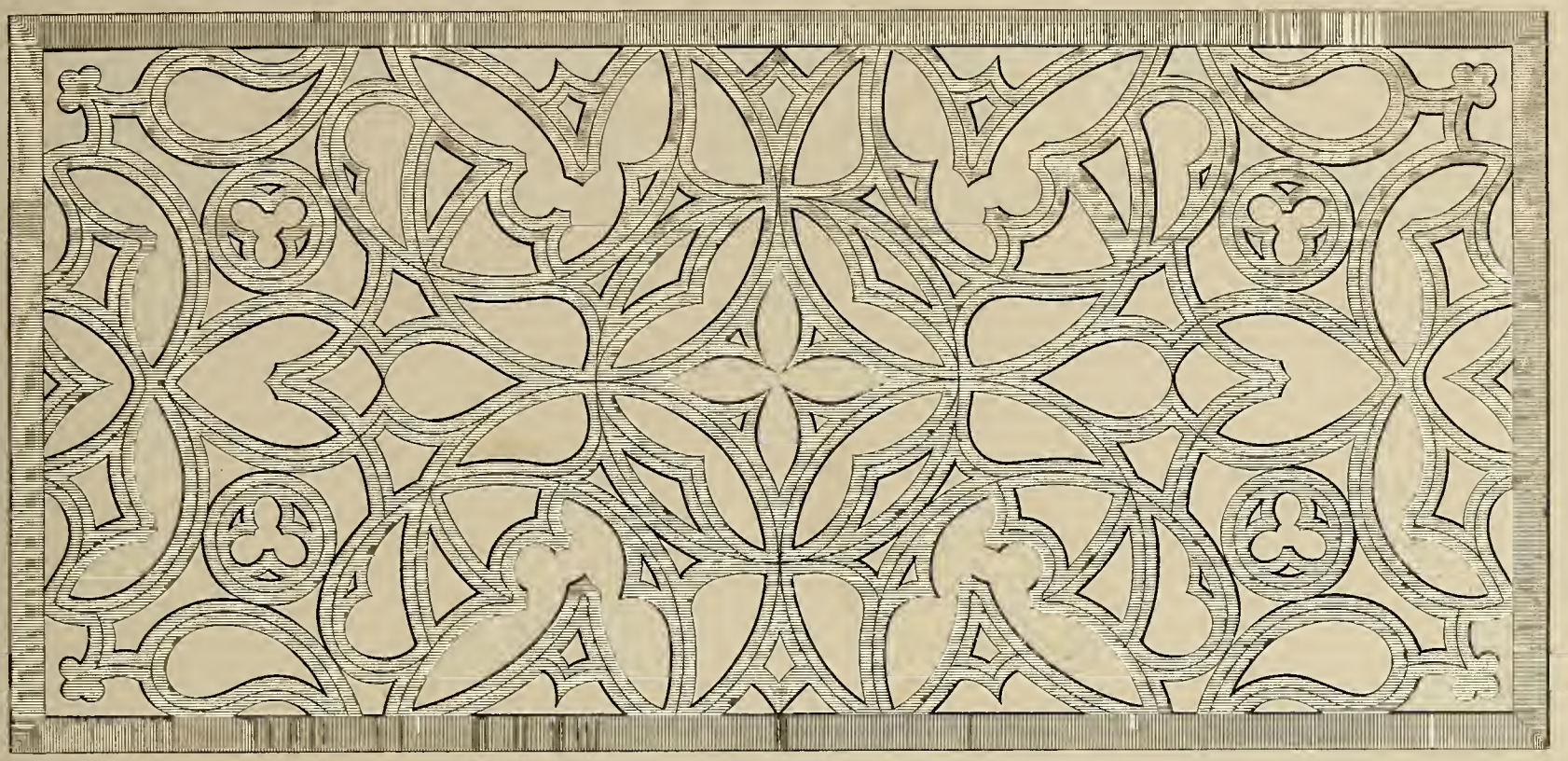
CEILINGS.-ELIZABETHAN.

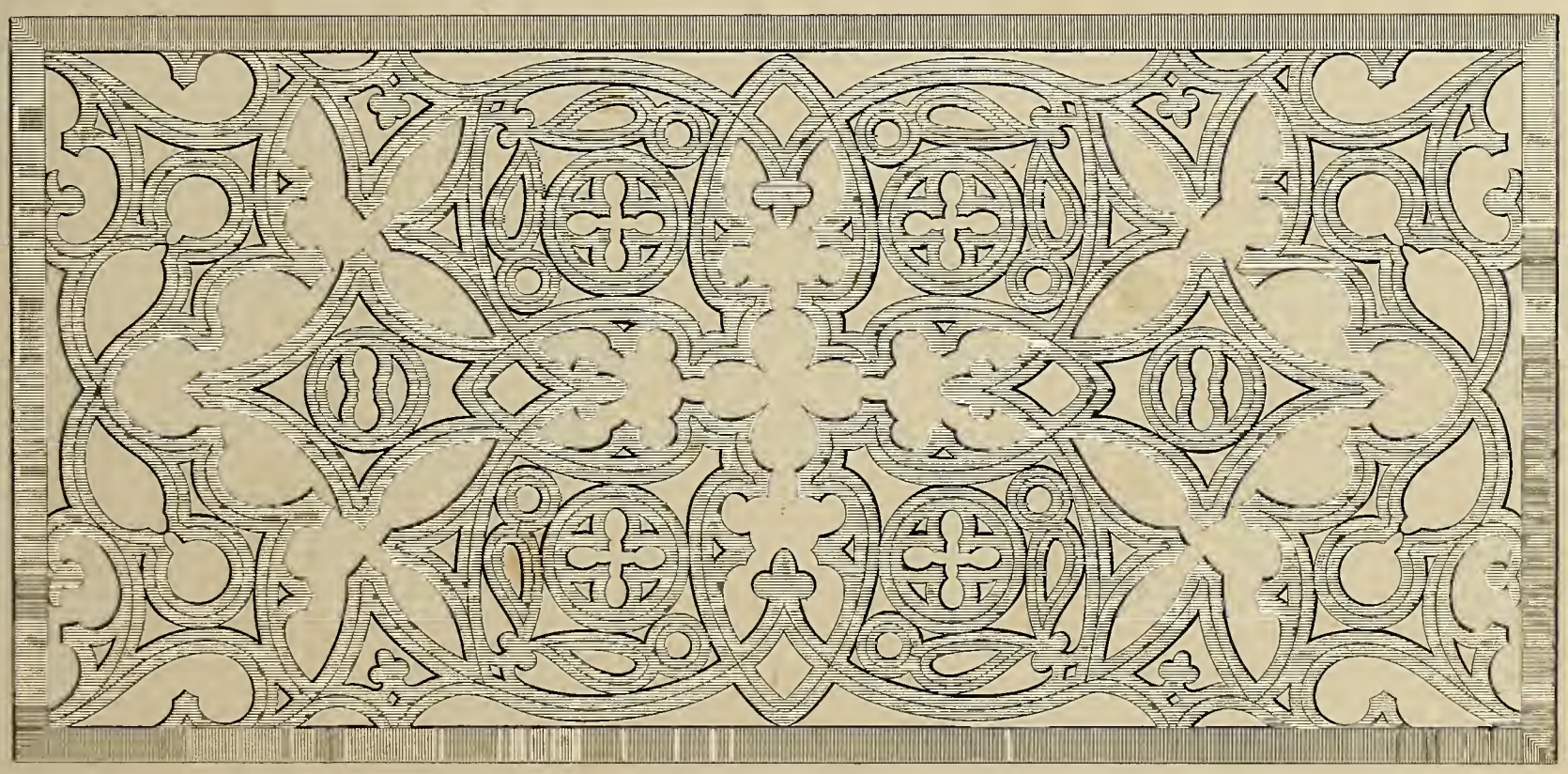
S. Leith Del.t

et Litho Edin.t

IRON WORK – ITALIAN.

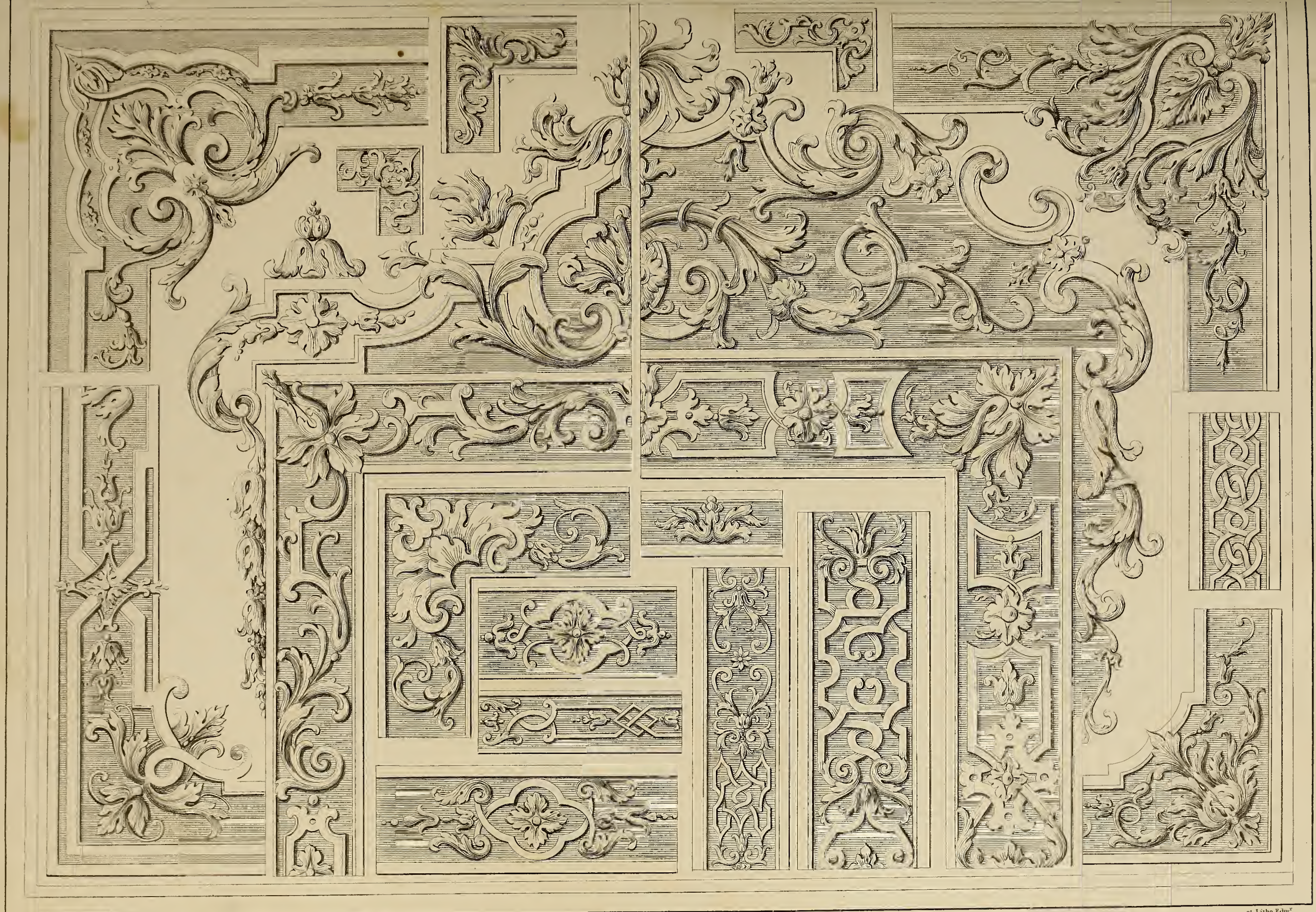
TRELLIS WORK — FLEMISH.





PERFORATED RAIL.- GOTHIC.

SHIELDS.- ELIZABETHAN



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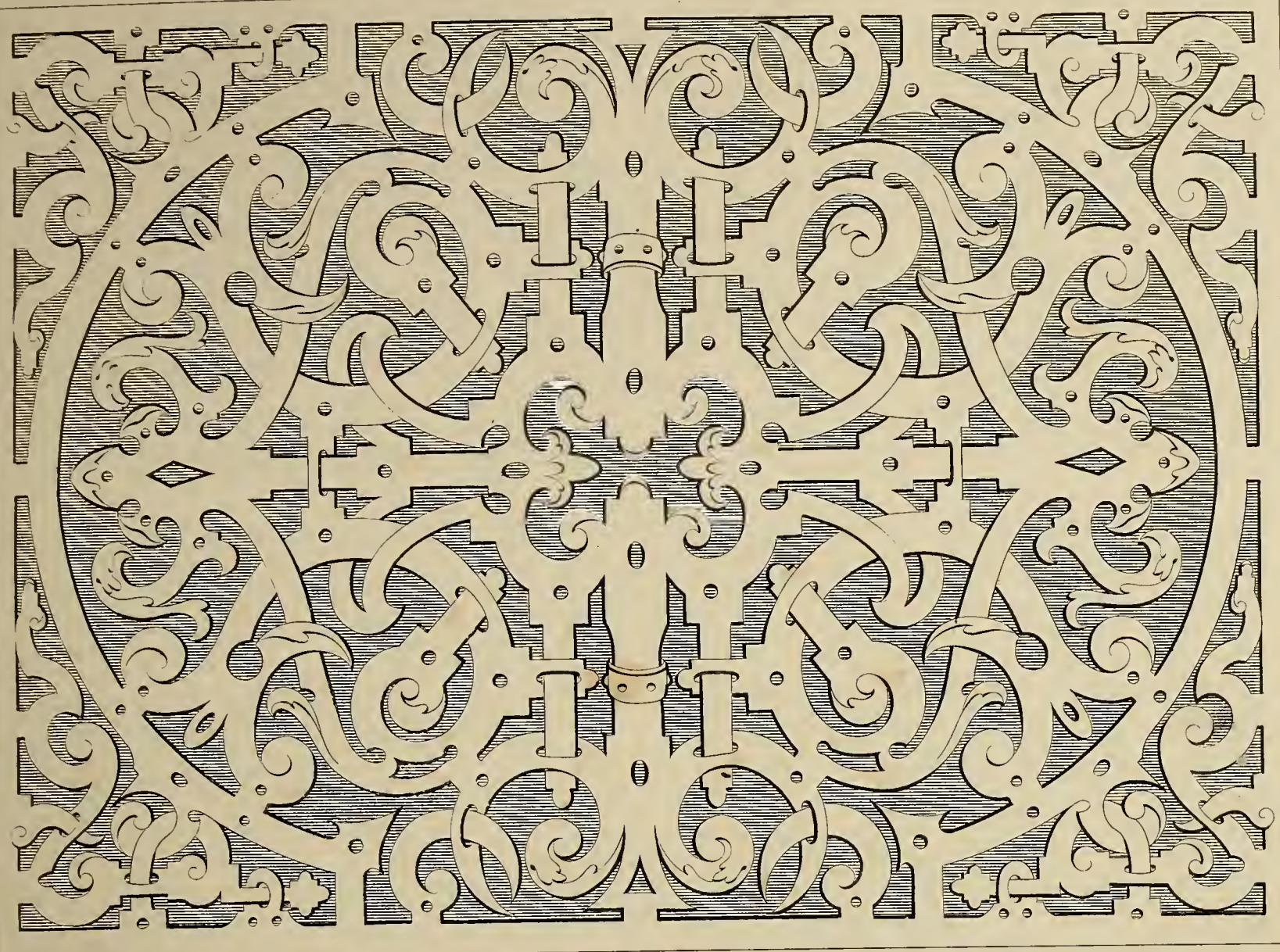
BORDERS.—ITALIAN.

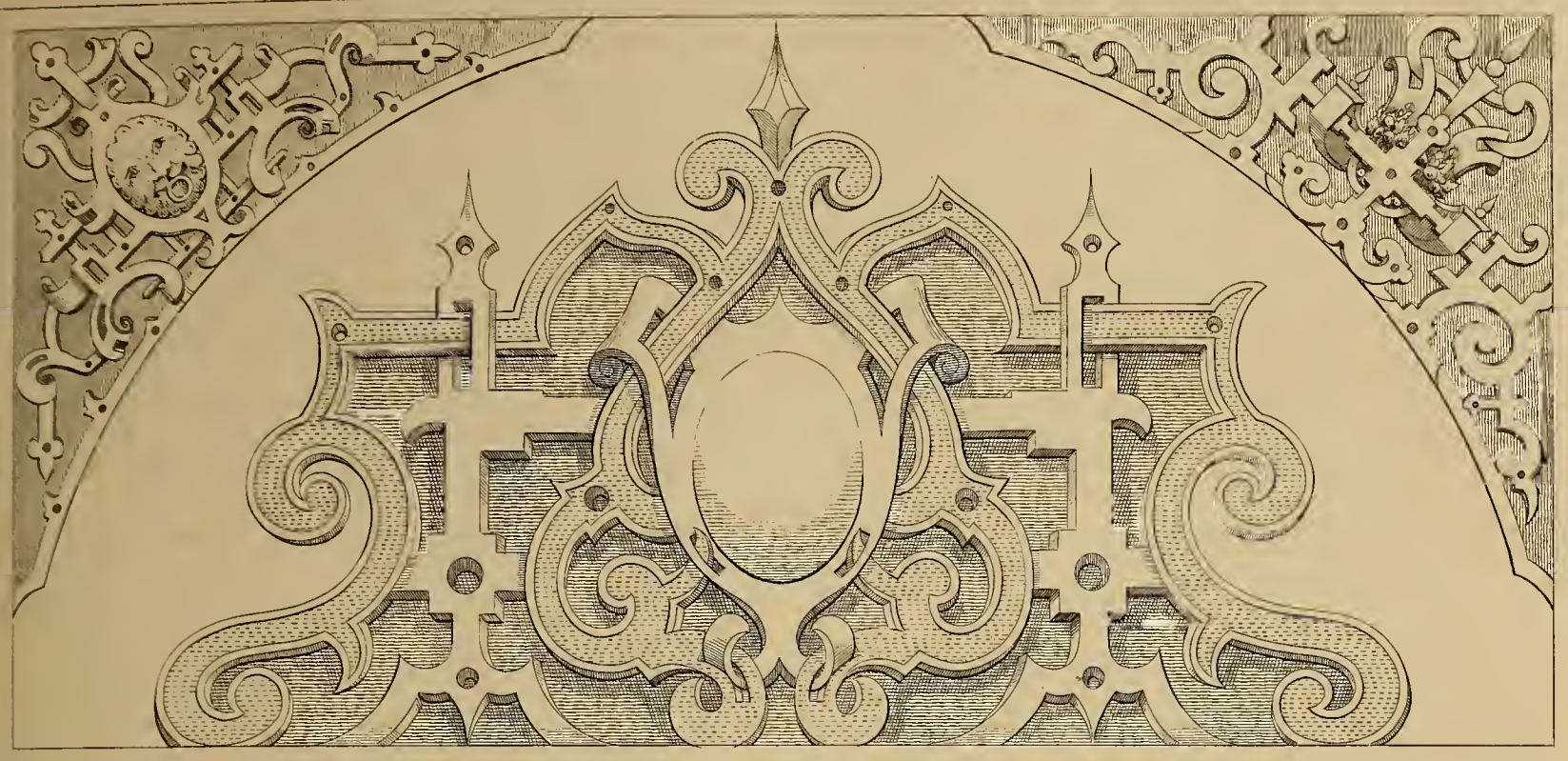


CEILINGS.-ELIZABETHAN.

S. Leith Del.

et. Litho Edin.

ORNAMENTAL PERFORATED RAIL.—ELIZABETHAN.



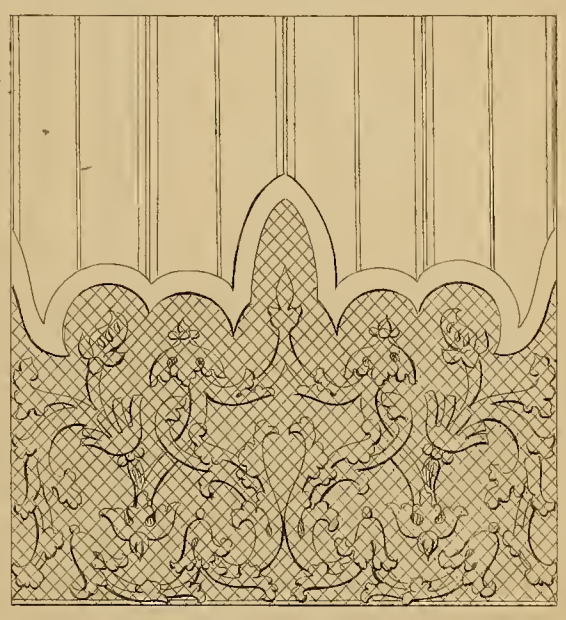
WINDOW HEADS &c — ELIZABETHAN.

CARPETING.- EGYPTIAN.

DAMASK TABLE COVER.- GRECIAN

1

2



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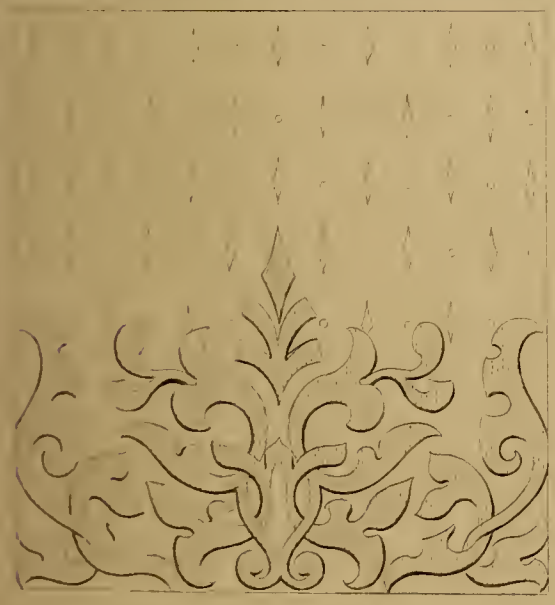
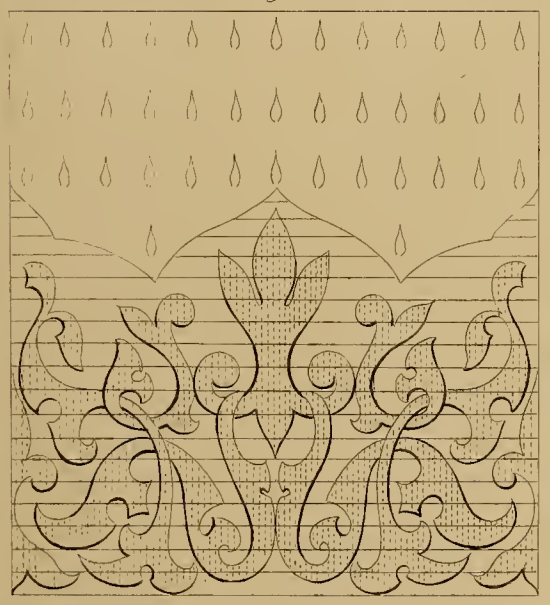
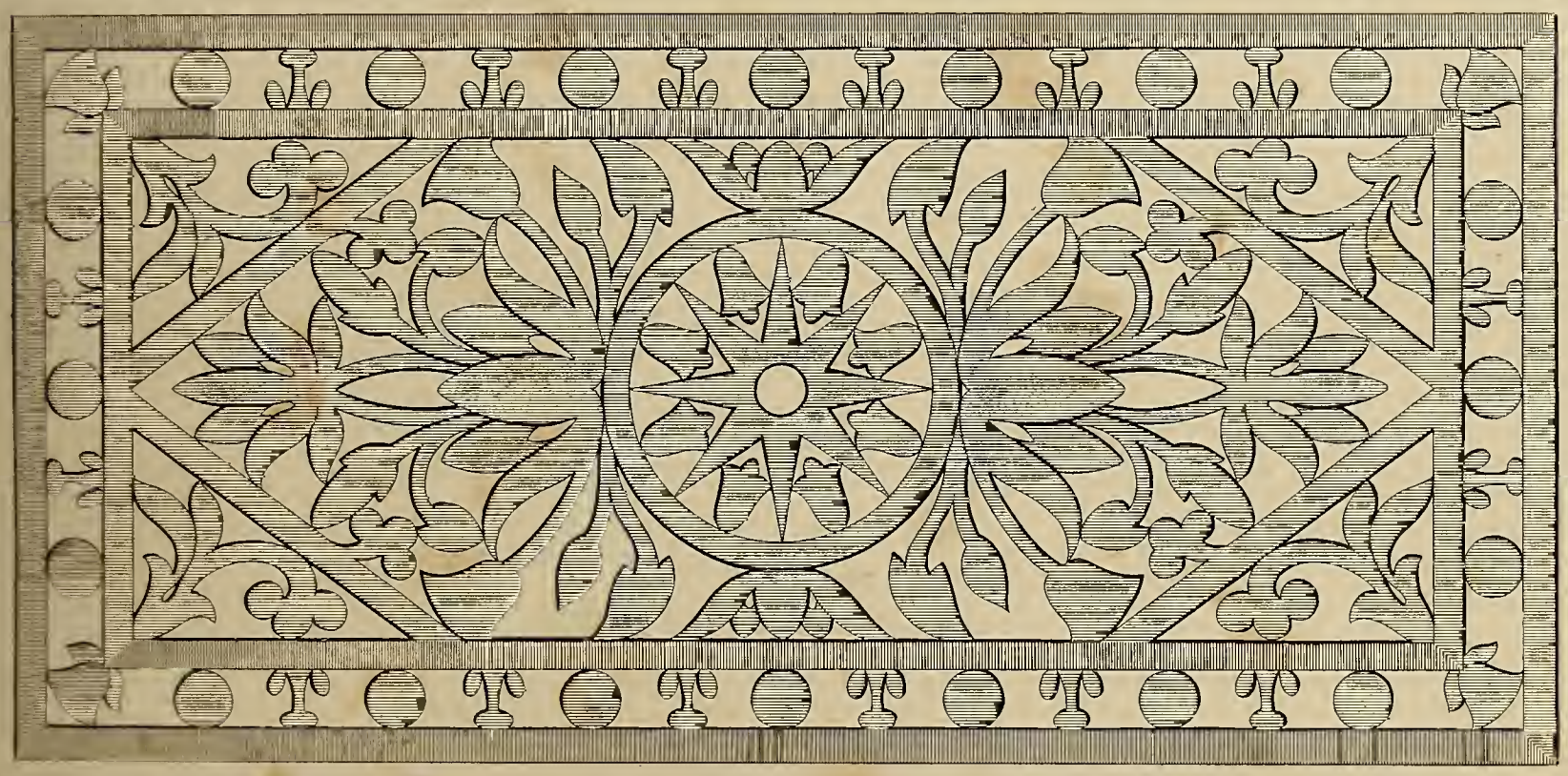




4

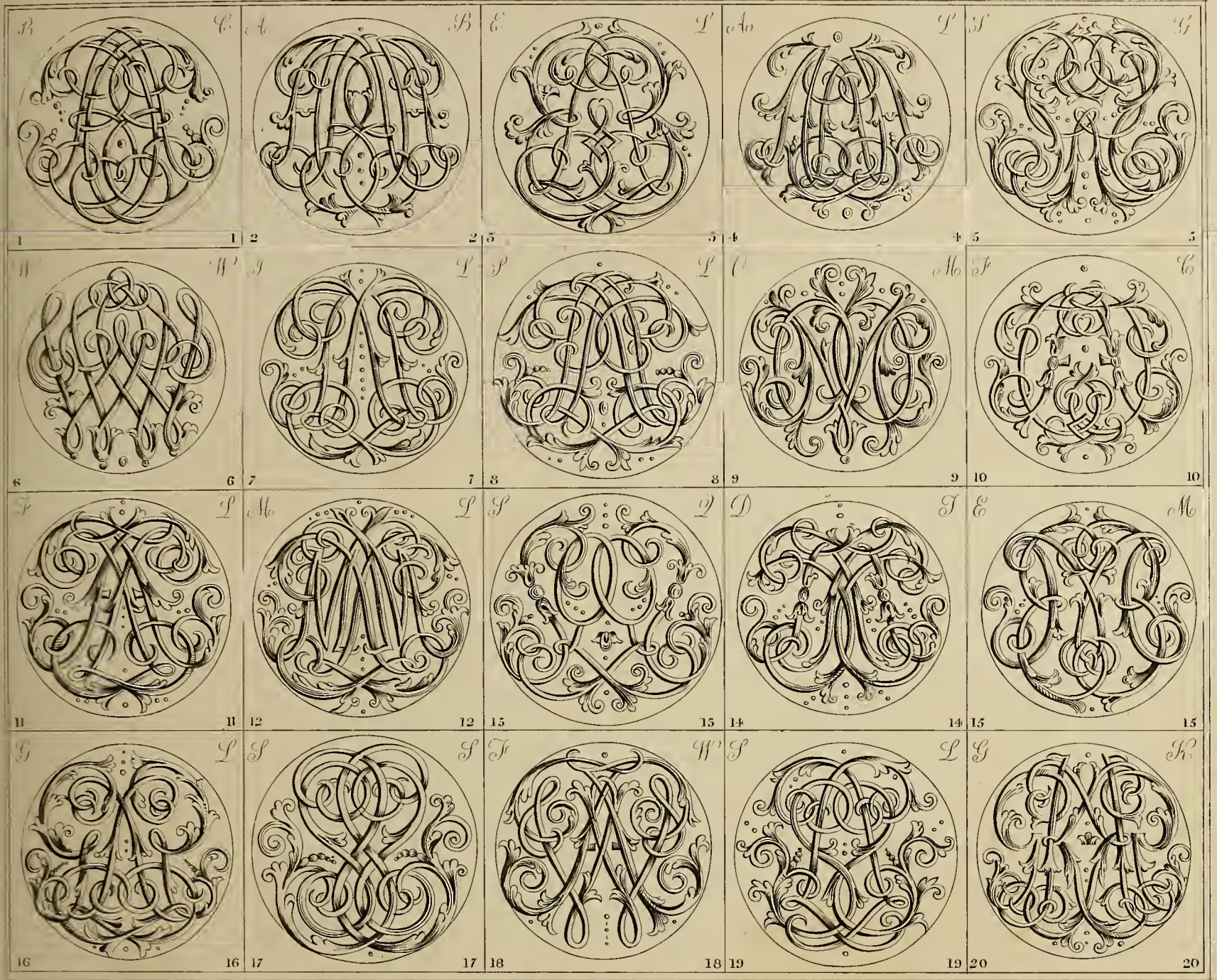
LACE PATTERNS

1 LOUIS QUATORZE. 2. FLEMISH. 3. MOORISH. 4. ARABESQUE.



PERFORATED RAIL. – ECYPTIAN

PAPER HANGINGS.-FLEMISH




# EXAMPLES

for the Ready Composition of any Cypher consisting of 3, 4 or more Letters.

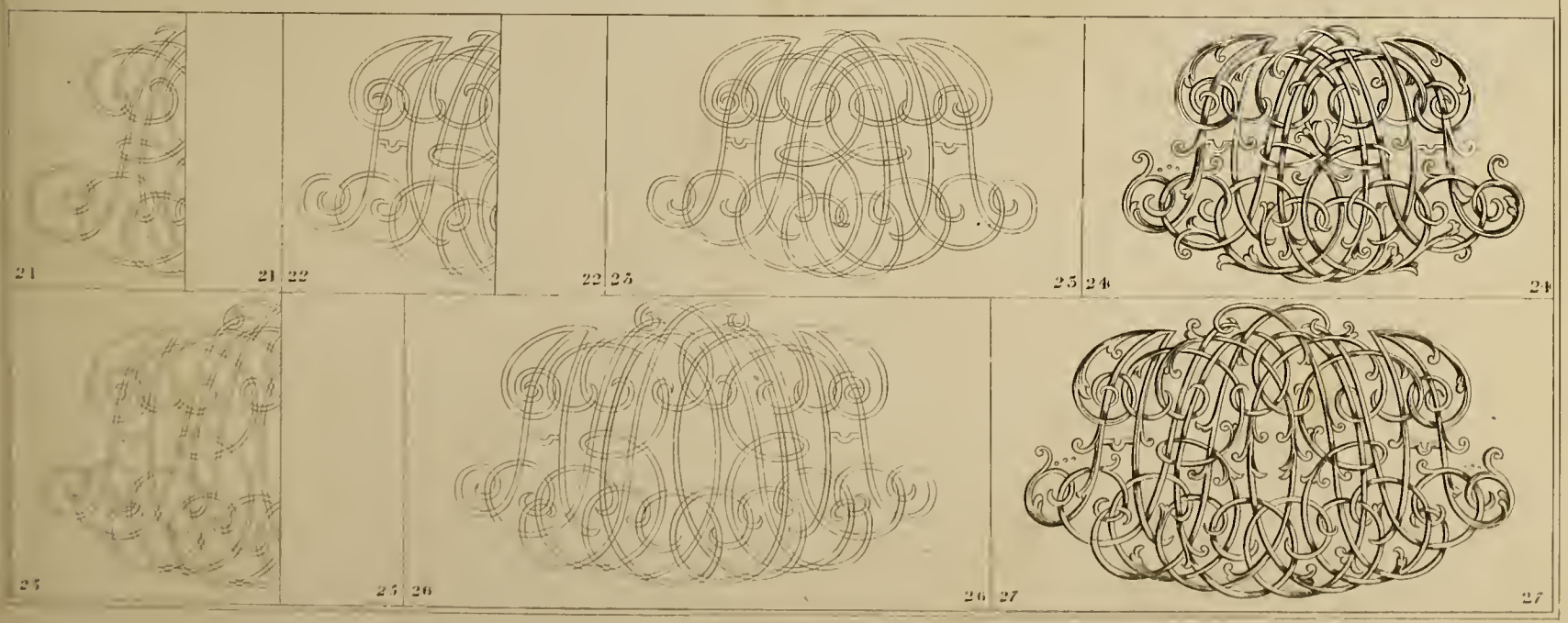
Suppose the required letters to be A B C, though any others will produce the same effect:

1st Take the two last letters B C Cypher, № 1. fold your paper in the middle and draw the one half only of B C in plain double lines without Ornament as represented in № 21.

2nd Add A to B C already drawn in the same manner as you there find it interwoven with the B, Cypher № 2. and as represented in № 22. then reverse the whole as in № 23 and you will have the entire draught at once.

Fill up the vacant spaces with ornament as in № 21.

By the foregoing Rules and Examples, Cyphers consisting of A B C D or any other letters may be Composed, by first drawing the two last letters C D, to which prefix B as in B C, and then A as in A B, shewn in № 25 which reverse as in № 26 and fill up as in № 27.




INITIAL CYPHERS.

# ESSAY

ON

# ORNAMENTAL ART

AS APPLICABLE TO

# TRADE AND MANUFACTURES.

BY

JAMES BALLANTINE,

AUTHOR OF "A TREATISE ON PAINTED GLASS," ETC. ETC.

LONDON:

W. S. ORR, & CO., PATERNOSTER ROW.

EDINBURGH: JOHN MENZIES.

M.DCCC.XLVII

the lower but still most beautiful field of Ornament, was not lost on the other artists of their own period and of succeeding times. From them, and by their means, it descended to, and spread widely among, the people generally; and the result at the present day is seen in the all but universal love which prevails over the Continent for every thing that is associated with Ornamental Design, either in art or manufactures.

In so far as this circumstance bears on the mercantile prosperity of our own country, it is pregnant with questions of vital interest; for it is well known that to foreign countries, especially to France, has long been conceded a pre-eminence in this branch of commerce, solely from the perfection to which it has there been brought,—a result greatly aided by the fact, that the governments of many of these states have ever been deeply impressed with the importance of the subject, and fully alive to the necessity of giving every support to the theory and practice of Ornamental Art. In this country, until a recent period, a different course has been pursued, of which the injurious effects are easily perceptible; but a wiser policy at length prevails, and we are already beginning to reap the fruits of that better system which is now at work in aiding and encouraging the energies of the people to a successful rivalry of their Continental neighbours. Schools of Design are not only being organised among us, but are extending their influence in many directions; and it is to be hoped, that ere long the system will be so completely a part and parcel of our national scheme of education, that no mechanic, however humble his calling, will deem himself exempt from the necessity of obtaining his ticket of admission to the classes of these institutions. The great advances, too, made within the last few years in many of our manufactures requiring the aid of Ornamental Design, are sufficient proof of the growing estimation in which this branch of art is held by the public; and it argues well for the improving taste of all classes, that a tolerable appreciation of the Beautiful, as connected with articles of household and daily use, is now regarded not only as desirable, but almost as a matter of course. It is pleasing to reflect how much this is calculated to conduce to the happiness of society, in the increased comfort of which such a taste is the certain harbinger; and in this light, a love for the refinements of Art must ever be considered an essential and positive good,—as an element, with other branches of

increasing knowledge, in elevating the character and ameliorating the condition of the human race.

Under these circumstances, it is reasonable to expect that every attempt having for its object the further improvement of our Manufactures, by instructing and otherwise aiding those who are engaged in their production, will receive the full amount of encouragement due to its intrinsic merits; and in this belief the present publication, consisting principally of a series of Original Designs, modelled on the highest authorities both ancient and modern, is now offered to the public.

In every means that may be adopted to impart an accurate knowledge of Ornamental Design to the ordinary mechanic, too much care cannot be observed, both as regards the examples set before him, and the way in which the necessity is enforced of a strict adherence to the true principles of Art; for in cases where a certain degree of excellence has been acquired, independent of a correct rule, the workman is not disposed to retrace his steps by undoing what he considers already sufficient for his purpose; and in the case of others who are less advanced, the rules and patterns of the shop are preferred to the rules of Art, because more easy of attainment, and more in accordance with their limited views on the subject. It is thus no uncommon thing to find, in workshops where decorative art is practised, examples daily occurring of a total disregard of every element which constitutes either purity of taste or correctness and oneness of design. We see the Gothic mixed at random with the Grecian—the Elizabethan, the French of the period of Louis XIV., and the Flemish, with the Roman, the Moorish, and the Egyptian; and all these constantly overlaid with a variety of ornament invented for the occasion, the main object in most cases being to hide the defects resulting from an entire want of knowledge of the principles which ought to regulate the choice and arrangement of the various materials, and to arrive only at showy effects, however incongruous and deficient in good taste. Nor is the workman altogether to blame for this, seeing how little has hitherto been done to draw his attention to the all-important but simple fact, that mere natural talent and manual skill are in themselves inadequate to bestow that chasteness of style, correctness of detail, and dexterity in combination, so absolutely necessary to insure success in Ornamental Design.

The object of the present Work is to remedy, so far as it may be capable of

doing so, these and similar errors and incongruities; and to supply to the public in general, but especially to those trades in which a knowledge of Ornamental Design is required, a correct, simple, and copious guide in that beautiful art. The CABINET-MAKER, IRONFOUNDER, PAINTER, BRASSFOUNDER, SILVERSMITH, PAPER-STAINER, ENGRAVER, WOOD-CARVER, FRAME-MAKER, DAMASK-WEAVER, BOOKBINDER, and many others, will find in this volume materials suggestive of an infinite variety of chaste and classical designs, arranged on principles so clear and comprehensive as to present examples capable of being appreciated and used by every workman; and it may be noticed, as a peculiar and most important feature in the plan of the Work, that in the arrangement of the Designs for each *particular* trade, care has been taken to render the whole Series susceptible of being modified, re-arranged, and adapted to the use of tradesmen *in general;* so that the patterns intended more immediately for the Ironfounder, Bookbinder, Painter, or Cabinet-maker, may with the greatest facility be transposed (if we may use the term) for the various purposes of any of the other Trades mentioned above.

In conclusion, one point above all others will be kept steadily in view throughout the course of the publication—viz., the GENERAL UTILITY of every Design introduced. It is intended, from time to time, to present copies of rare and valuable Etchings by some of the great masters, as in the beautiful group in Part I. by Guido, after Lucas Cambiaso; an arrangement which, it is believed, will be of great advantage to several of the ornamental trades, especially to the Silversmith, House-decorator, Modeller in stucco, and Wood-carver, and may not be unserviceable even in the higher walks of Art. These instances, however, will not be of frequent occurrence, the main purpose of the Work being of wider application than to admit of more than a very limited proportion of such designs; but their occasional introduction cannot fail greatly to enhance its value to the Trades just mentioned, as well as to purchasers generally. With these brief remarks the Work is presented to the public, whose patronage no exertion will be spared to deserve and to obtain.

# ESSAY ON ORNAMENTAL ART.

The principal purpose of the following remarks is to render clear and intelligible to those engaged in the various departments of manufacture connected with Ornamental Design, the nature and peculiarities of the various modes of embellishment and styles of decoration, invented and practised by different nations; to show that all of them have their origin in nature; to point out the differences that exist between them; to assist in the selection of such portions of them as seem suitable to our own time and country; and to impress upon the Ornamental Designer the propriety of looking to Nature herself as the great primal source of all beauty.

In seeking to accomplish these objects, it will also be necessary to enter into a careful examination of the present state of the Ornamental Arts; to inquire particularly into the general taste and knowledge displayed in the manufacture of articles of dress, of furniture, and of vertu, as well as that exhibited by those who practise the decorative arts, in working out the details, or enhancing the effect of public structures, or private dwelling-houses, either externally or internally.

From what has been said, it will be seen that the ensuing remarks are intended to embrace a great variety of trades and manufactures; and it is hoped that the working artist, whether engaged in drawing, painting, modelling, carving, casting, weaving, or dyeing, will find the principles applicable to these arts laid down at once in a plain, correct, and useful manner.

Simplicity and truth are unquestionably the principal elements of all beauty, and the foundation of all artistic excellence. Objects addressed to the eye must

please at first sight; if they do not, no process of reasoning will afterwards reconcile us to them, far less invest them with the beauty sought for or expected. To speak of works of art growing upon our liking is absurd. Persons may, and often do, improve on acquaintance, but works of art never. The perception of beauty is inherent in the human mind, which is rapid in its combinations, and prompt and irrevocable in its decisions.

Man, in his primitive state, feels a strong desire to imitate and perpetuate that which is beautiful; and hence it is that we find him attaining considerable skill in ornamental arts, before he has acquired any knowledge of those which contribute more immediately to his social comforts. The South Sea Islander, with no better instrument than a piece of shell or tale, produces specimens of carving closely approaching the most successful efforts of our best artists; and in several authenticated fragments of ancient British art, ornamental details are exhibited nearly equalling the best specimens of Greece or Rome. The savage who roams through the pathless forest, decks himself with the beautiful productions of nature, thus showing that an appreciation of beauty is an innate principle of the human mind. The first adaptation of natural objects to decorative art, is in the adornment of the person; when this propensity is extended to the dwelling-place, it evinces a more advanced stage of refinement and of social improvement. This development of what is undoubtedly an innate principle of the human mind, enables us to affirm, that the basis of every style of ornamental decoration is to be found in the general aspect, and natural productions, of the country wherein each style had its origin.

Every style of Ornamental Art has its peculiar features, and perhaps it may also be said its peculiar beauties, although artists often betray a tendency to think lightly of every style but that which has struck their fancy, and has become the object of their admiration and the subject of their studies. The diligent student, however, who comes unprejudiced to the inquiry, will soon discover that every style has something to recommend it, something which renders it peculiarly adapted to the age and country in which it has been most generally practised: he will, probably, also discover that beautiful combinations are to be found in each and all of the various styles, and that though the elements of beauty are few and simple, they are capable of the most diversified arrangements and combinations, and present, in their practical application to the purposes of art, a boundless field for invention. This proposition we shall hereafter have occasion more fully to illustrate, when examining the peculiarities of

the different styles of Ornament. In the mean time, it may not be amiss that the young student bear in mind that we have native plants and flowers equal in beauty to the lotus of the Egyptians, or the acanthus of the Greeks, and equally well calculated to form the basis of a school of Ornamental Design.

It is evident that if the decorative artist has a knowledge of what has been done in his art in other ages and in other countries, and has been taught to appreciate the uses and spirit of these productions, he will be enabled to select such portions as may suit his own peculiar views, and harmonise with the general character of his work. If he have the higher faculty of invention or adaptation, he will, from having such information, be better able to avoid repeating that which was formerly done, and, consequently, his work will be all the more original. But as this divine faculty is rare, so is the necessity proportionably great, for skilful manipulation, and a thorough knowledge of his art, to compensate this desideratum on the part of the artistic workman. In the difficulty which every practical and inventive decorative artist has experienced in getting assistants qualified to work out his ideas, we have a forcible reason why our mechanical manipulators should be more thoroughly educated than they have hitherto been. Were this the case, they would be better able to work from the sketch of the designer, and to bring out every minor feature which, in a hurried sketch, may have been omitted. The Marble-cutter, for example, who has been furnished by an architect with a slight sketch, on a small scale, of a mantel-piece in the Louis Quatorze style, could never work out the detail in full size, and in its true spirit, unless he were thoroughly versant in the peculiarities of that kind of ornament. Neither could the Brassfounder, Plasterer, Upholsterer, or House Decorator, produce such articles as might be required in their departments in connection with a building, unless they were equally acquainted with the style to which the structure belonged. In addition to this information, they also require to have at command examples to which they can continually refer, and from which they can occasionally borrow. Without such aids, without ready access to a copious and judicious selection of examples from approved sources, such as it is hoped the present work will supply, the working artist's resources will be incomplete, and his progress slow and unsatisfactory.

Requesting the reader to keep these preliminary remarks in view, we now proceed, as proposed, to enquire into the nature and peculiarities of the various modes of embellishments, and styles of decoration, invented and practised by different

nations, and shall begin by giving a brief description and analysis of the ornamental arts, as practised in Ancient Egypt, now universally acknowledged to have been the original seat of the Arts and Sciences.

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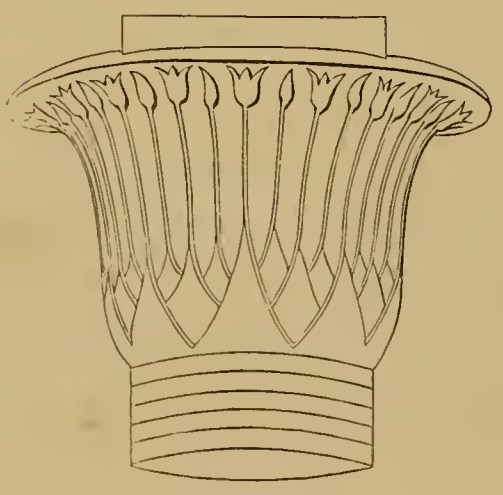
## ON THE ORNAMENTAL ARTS OF THE EGYPTIANS.

No nation has ever surpassed the ancient Egyptians in the imitative and ornamental arts; and this because their works were pure emanations of genius, embodiments of high and original conception, and not copies of previous creations. The gigantic structures of Egypt still continue to excite universal wonder and admiration, and there is not a portion of these magnificent edifices wherein we cannot trace the imitation of natural objects. The lotus was a most important element in the religious system, as well as in the daily economy of the ancient Egyptians; and its simple and graceful form has received many modifications at the hands of the Egyptian sculptor, who selected and adapted with great taste natural models for architectural ornament. The bottoms of many of the pillars are gracefully rounded like the calyx of a flower, and the lotus, the palm, and the papyrus are visible both



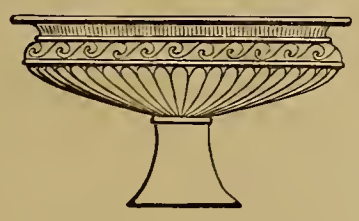
in their shafts and capitals. On the outside of the graceful curvature of the capitals are frequently to be seen also the bulrush and the vine; and in some cases we find a near approximation to the volute of the Ionic, and the leafy foliage of the Corinthian capital.

In the imitation of natural objects the Egyptians were eminently successful, they manufactured and coloured glass in such a way as to be mistaken for the amethyst and other precious stones; and when their chairs, tables, and sofas were made of the more common descriptions of wood, they were painted, with the happiest effect, in imitation of foreign varieties—the various knots and grains being indicated precisely in the way practised in the present day. These successful imitations of rare and costly articles, through the medium of the most common materials, show that the Egyptians had attained a high degree of civilisation.

The art of casting and engraving gold and silver plate was also well known to this enlightened people, whose skill in these manufactures is attested by numerous gold and silver vessels, and by quantities of jewellery, still preserved, all of the most elegant form and exquisite workmanship. Lotus flowers in enamel, amethysts, pearls, imitations of shells and leaves, with numerous figures and devices, were common on the bracelets, necklaces, and rings which once adorned the persons of the ladies of Thebes.

The Egyptians were skilled in all the methods of applying gold, whether in leaf or by inlaying it with other metals. The method they had of beating out their gold leaf, which was extremely thin and fine, was in all probability similar to that recently practised in Europe. The faces of mummies, and sometimes the entire bodies, were gilded, and the painted clothes as well as the wooden coffins were profusely ornamented with gold.

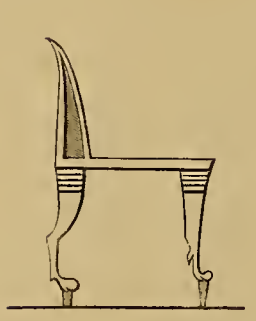
Many of the Egyptian vases bear so strong a resemblance to those produced in the best epochs of Grecian art, that some have imagined them to have been designed after Greek patterns. Their high antiquity, however, is sufficiently attested by the remote periods when they were executed. The gold vase, the form of which is here shown, is said to have been made 1500 years before the Christian era.

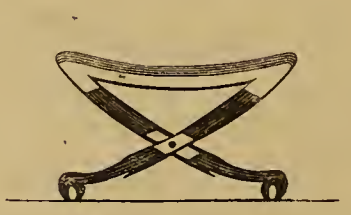


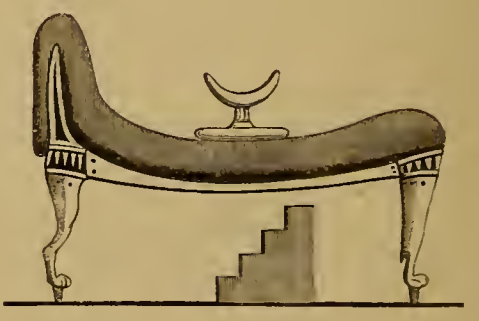
Sculpture was much employed in the decoration of the temples and palaces—the walls of which were covered with reliefs or intaglios: those of the temples repre-

senting religious subjects, while those of the palaces were delineations of battles, hunting scenes, and occasionally the occupations of daily life. The difficult art of sculpturing granite was also well known; and the hieroglyphics on granite obelisks and other monuments are sculptured with a minuteness and delicacy of finish which modern artists have not yet attained. The Egyptians were also skilled in the compounding of metals, many of their bronzes retaining smooth and bright surfaces, though buried for ages, and afterwards exposed to the damp of European climates.

The Egyptians were a domestic people, and extremely attentive to the decoration of their houses. Their articles of furniture were at once rich in colour and graceful in form; and the commonest utensils were characterised by singular elegance. Their chairs and couches were about the same height with those now in use; and were nearly the same in form and construction. At an early period the skill of their cabinetmakers had obviated the necessity of uniting the legs with bars; and they were generally formed in imitation of those of some animal, the foot raised on a small block or pin. The back of the chair was occasionally concave; and in many of the large fauteuils a lion formed an arm on either side. The cushions of the fauteuils and couches were of coloured cotton, painted leather, or gold and silver tissue, and the framework was frequently bound with ornamental metal plates, or inlaid with ivory and foreign woods. The cuts here introduced will give an idea of the forms of the chair, the camp stool, and the couch, which bear considerable resemblance to those of the present day.







The walls and ceilings of the Egyptian apartments were richly painted, and generally with exquisite taste. The ceilings were laid out in compartments, each having a geometric or foliated pattern with an appropriate border. The favourite

forms were the square, the diamond, the circle, and the succession of scrolls, and square within square, known as the Tuscan border, and so often found on Greek and Etruscan vases, as well as on similar ornamental designs that were afterwards adopted by the Romans. The following forms are of an age 1600 years prior to the Christian era.

The walls of the palaces were inlaid with precious metals, ebony, and ivory. Lucan thus describes the banqueting hall of Cleopatra :—

" Thick golden plates the latent beams infold,
And the high roof was fretted o'er with gold.
Of solid marble all the walls were made,
And onyx even the meaner floor inlaid;
While porphyry and agate round the court,
In massy columns rose a proud support.
Of solid ebony each post was wrought,
From swarthy Meroë profusely brought.
With ivory was the entrance crusted o'er,
And polished tortoise hid each shining door;
While on the cloudy spots enchased was seen
The lively emerald's never failing green."

In concluding this brief analysis of the Ornamental Arts in Egypt, we cannot but advert to the remarkable analogy between the construction of the hieroglyphic names and standards of the ancient Egyptian monarchs, and the quartering of arms in modern heraldry. In the hieroglyphic inscriptions every king bears two names, each enclosed within an oval. In these ovals are blazoned the bearings derived from the prenomen and second name of the father, or from the wife and her father, similar to the manner in which the blazon of the husband and wife are impaled in

modern shields; and from these symbols of descent or alliance we can trace the origin and extraction of the Pharoahs of Ancient Egypt. Nor is this the only analogy, the resemblance obtains through the whole system; and an ancient oval, crested with its ostrich, and flanked with the royal basilisk, was almost identical with a modern escutcheon with its supporters. It seems probable, therefore, that our heraldic system is an offshoot of the ancient blazonry of names and banners adapted to European customs and requirements, and that the rudiments of this, as well as those of every other department of ornamental art, were known four thousand years ago.

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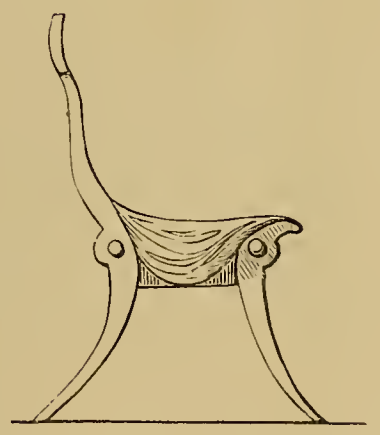
## ON THE ORNAMENTAL ARTS OF ANCIENT GREECE.

The extent to which the Greeks improved on the designs of the Egyptians is very remarkable, and eminently calculated to impress us with the highest opinion of their genius and taste. In Egypt we find the rudiments of all the arts that tend to advance social refinement; in Greece we find those rudiments formed into systems of beauty and symmetry. All the ornamental designs of the Greeks, whether in articles of dress or furniture, whether in their private dwellings or their public structures, were characterized by great simplicity and elegance. Having studied thoroughly the principles developed in the works of the Egyptians, the Greeks caught the spirit in which they were conceived, and quickly surpassed their teachers. What the lotus and palm had been to the former, the acanthus and honeysuckle became to the latter; and forms based on these indigenous plants were used in ornamenting every article of dress, as well as in the decoration of every public edifice. The source of design being fully explored, the art soon became sufficiently understood. An infinite variety of graceful outline and exquisite proportion was exhibited in the public temples and sculptures by which they were adorned; and the craftsmen of Greece, thus familiarized to the sight of beauty, became capable of discriminating, as if instinctively, between what was incongruous and what possessed the charm of unity. The contemplation of the ornamental sculptures on these matchless structures would suggest to the mechanic the propriety of generalizing his ideas of nature, and would enable him to select and arrange her productions to suit the

requirements of his particular branch of art. In this way alone can we account for the universal presence of that beauty which distinguishes all their works.

The Grecians seem not to have attached so much value to costly material as to fine design; and even when rich dresses and gorgeous furnishings were used, they were chiefly valued on account of their elegance and delicacy of execution. Their lamps, for example, were not of gold or silver, but of brass, wrought by the best sculptor that the purchaser could afford to employ; and the metal was left to its natural tarnish to show the work to advantage.

It is to be regretted that we have not been able to obtain a more complete knowledge of the internal arrangements and adornments of the private dwelling-houses of Greece. We know, however, that this singular people were universally animated by a desire to extend and perpetuate the national glory, and that all their surplus wealth was voluntarily contributed towards the erection of those beautiful temples, which have never been equalled, and which still remain the admiration of the world. There is every reason, therefore, to believe that their dwelling-houses were furnished in a plain and unostentatious manner; but however homely the material of which their household utensils were made, the shapes into which they were fashioned were singularly elegant and graceful. The antique jug, basket, and chair here shown, will give an idea of the exquisite taste of the Greeks in form, carried into the most ordinary utensils, and developed in the most common furniture.



If the ordinary utensils and common articles of furniture were thus beautiful, the vases which were set aside for sacred purposes or extraordinary occasions were emi-

nently so; and while they were exceedingly varied in design, they were invariably graceful and elegant in form. Artistic talent of the highest order was engaged in their enrichment; and many of the most choice specimens of Grecian art are to be found adorning those interesting relics of antiquity. Nor is this to be wondered at: the material of which they were formed was likely to endure for ever; and the high purposes to which they were destined were calculated to call forth all the energy and enthusiasm of the artists employed in their production. The designs on the vases for temples either illustrated the mythological history or the religious services of the deity in whose worship they were engaged. On those which were awarded as prizes at the Olympic games, the designs were generally allegorical, and represented virtuous and heroic deeds. Others used for funereal purposes were frequently adorned with devices emblematic of the life and character of the deceased; and from the multiplicity of designs preserved in these monuments we derive the most important information concerning the history, dresses, and customs of the ancient Greeks.

Recent discoveries have shown that the finest structures of Greece were gorgeously decorated with positive colours; and in a country where the fine arts were so highly appreciated, and where all the national edifices were constructed on principles of the most perfect symmetry, there can be no doubt that the same exquisite perception of beauty in the harmony of colour would be apparent in their chromatic arrangements. We know also that groups of figures skilfully executed and gracefully arranged, embodying lofty conceptions and elevated sentiments, adorned the chief places in their temples; while ornaments, consisting of beautiful flowers, and leaves of elegant form, were introduced with the most exquisite skill, and in a manner that made them appear as if fresh and glistening from the hand of nature. In the ornaments in the finest of the Greek temples, such as the Erechtheum, we find, in every portion of the detail, a strong resemblance to the sources from which they had been derived. Ornamental astragals, for example, are direct imitations of the strung pearls used in female decoration; the holly leaf enriches the mouldings of the doorways; the plait ornament at top and bottom of the shafts of columns is a precise imitation of a plait of silk ribbon; and the close resemblance which those foliated ornaments with which apices, friezes, and capitals are enriched, bear to the acanthus and the honeysuckle, shows distinctly the origin of these beautiful decorations. The following remarks on Grecian Ornament, by

Mr Kinnard, in the supplement to Stuart's 'Athens,' are in unison with this opinion:—'The elemental form of such decorations is to be traced in the earliest contemporary specimens of Etruscan and Æginetan art. The Pelasgi, who founded the Hellenic and Etruscan nations, carried with them into the countries they colonized, manners, arts, and religion. The similitude of the forms of the ornamental sculpture of the distinct and distant nations they founded, renders it evident that they originally referred to one common prototype as connected with Oriental idolatry; and the sacred plant of the East, called *Tamara*, and by the ancient Greeks *Cyamus*, was probably the venerated object. That prototype, however, was abandoned and forgotten anterior to the age of the earliest relics of Grecian art, wherein we find imaginary curves of capricious formation; but when the arts had reached a higher state of refinement, we find their ornaments approximate to the principle of general vegetation, skilfully accommodated to the rectilinear formality of architecture—until, in the hands of the sculptors of the Periclean era, amid a people entertaining a remarkable passion for flowers, the Anthemion arrived at that character of elegance which established it as a model to posterior ages.'

The following copies are given as illustrative of these inferences:—No. 1, the most ancient, is of a hard and stiff style, and there is no imitation of any plant; but there would be little difficulty in tracing the change to richer embellishment, more imitative of vegetable nature, until perfection was attained in No. 2, the Anthemion

No. 1.

No. 2.

of the Erechtheum. In other cases, the ornament is executed with many varieties of detail, and teeming with new and tasteful combinations. The progress of ornamental

foliage in Gothic architecture was similar. At first no vegetable prototype seems to have been contemplated; but, as the style advanced to perfection, Nature was progressively more regarded. The following account, given by Vitruvius, of the origin of the capital of the Corinthian order, gives additional force to these remarks, and may tend to impress more deeply on the mind of the student the importance of looking to nature as the primal source of all beauty:—

'A young maiden of Corinth having died, her nurse collected in a basket the trinkets which had pleased her when alive—placed them over her grave, and covered the whole with a tile. The basket happened to be placed over the root of an acanthus plant, the leaves and shoots of which grew up round the basket, and curled round the angles of the tile. This interesting combination attracted the attention of Calimachus, the architect, who from thence designed the beautiful capital of the Corinthian column.'

The characteristic of Grecian ornament is elegant simplicity. Its curvatures are flowing, its proportions are symmetrical, and its features are altogether so varied and attractive, that we always hail them with delight, whether enriching the architectural detail of our public or private buildings, or ornamenting our most elegant articles of furniture or vertu.

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## ON THE ORNAMENTAL ARTS OF ANCIENT ROME.

The Romans, who perfected their arts by those of Greece, and who in their early efforts had the assistance of Greek artists, ultimately engrafted on their original models a richer luxuriance of leafy embellishment; and although in many cases their works are deficient in symmetrical proportion, they are invariably gorgeous and imposing. The Grecian style of ornament corresponds with the character of a nation that had enlightened the world, the Roman with that of a people who had conquered it.

The excavation of Herculaneum and Pompeii, cities which had been suddenly buried in the midst of their prosperity, and had remained undisturbed for nearly seventeen centuries, has revealed to us many of the most remarkable peculiarities in

the domestic economy of the ancient Romans, and has enabled us to ascertain the precise state of the arts as practised by them at that eventful period of their history. From these remains, it appears that the Romans had their houses furnished and decorated in the most sumptuous manner. The walls were enriched with coloured marbles and historical paintings, and the Arabesque style of decoration seems to have been universally prevalent. This style was introduced in the time of Augustus, previous to which it was customary with the Romans to paint the walls of their apartments one uniform colour, relieved by modelled ornaments.

One peculiarity in the mode of decorating the walls of Pompeian houses is worthy of notice, on account of its showing how well the artists understood the true principles of decoration. In the natural landscape, we find that the dark masses are in the foreground, the middle tints in the middle distance, and the light itself in the sky. In the houses of Pompeii, the dark colours are placed lowest, the shades becoming lighter as they approach the ceiling; the arrangement of tint thus conforming to the rule observed in nature. In some instances, it is true, this is very crudely carried out; but, even in such cases, the principles found in nature are adhered to, principles which, when employed in internal decoration, under well regulated taste, never fail to produce the most pleasing effects—giving at once airiness and dignity to the apartment to which they have been applied.

The influence which Etruria exercised over the Roman arts, at the period referred to, is visible in many of the decorations; many of the ornamental borders and scrolls on the walls of the houses of Pompeii and Herculaneum bearing a striking resemblance

to those on Etruscan vases. In almost all cases, these decorations, though singularly bold and free, seem to have been executed without any preliminary tracing or drawing, and the opposite sides of the same forms were, in consequence, seldom if ever precisely similar. In many of the Arabesque combinations, representations of native plants and flowers are to be seen, showing how highly the Romans appreciated, and how readily they introduced into their decorations, the graceful and beautiful in nature. The borders here shewn are from Gell's 'Pompeii,' and are extremely elegant.

It will be observed that the leading lines of these borders are eliptical, and that they are Grecian in character. It may, therefore, be inferred that they were exc-

cuted at a very early period. In the enrichments and embellishments of Roman buildings at a subsequent period, we find that the arrangements and curvatures are circular. The Romans preferred the rose to the lotus or the honeysuckle, and the preference is distinctly visible in the capitals, friezes, and mouldings of their buildings, as well as in their ornamental wreaths and devices; while those unique Roman vases, so many specimens of which have been discovered in almost every part of the civilized world, are of similar character, both in general design and in minor detail. This peculiarity constitutes the chief difference between the ornamental designs of the Greeks and Romans. In the former the leading lines are eliptical, in the latter they are circular; and as the elipse is found to be prevalent in every branch of the animal and vegetable kingdoms, it may safely be asserted that the ornamental arts of Greece were superior to those of Rome. The Romans seem to have preferred the circle so soon as they had freed themselves from the trammels of their predecessors, the Greeks, and had begun to design for themselves; and this is sufficiently illustrated by the following ornament from a ceiling of Pompeii, wherein the leading curves and general design are altogether circular:—

This ornament, which is a very early specimen of the style in which figures and foliage are connected, bears a striking resemblance to the Arabesques of Raphael, and confirms the belief that that great artist, in his decorative designs for the Vatican, followed the general character of the ornamental designs found in the Baths of Titus.

In no department of ornamental decoration did the Romans attain greater proficiency than in their Mosaic or tesselated pavements, which must have been produced at a very moderate expense, as a great number of the ordinary houses of Pompeii have been laid with this beautiful flooring. These Mosaics are chiefly com-

posed of black frets or meandering patterns on a white ground, or white ones on a black ground; but in some instances they are executed in coloured marbles, and have a magnificent appearance. Many fine pictures, brilliantly executed in Mosaic, have also been found in Pompeii, and specimens of all the different kinds, many of them surpassingly beautiful, have been dug up in various parts of London during the last century.

The Romans were also acquainted with the art of manufacturing and colouring glass, which they applied to many purposes of household ornament. Pliny mentions an artificer who had invented flexible glass, but who was banished, lest the discovery should injure the working jewellers, by superseding the use of gold and silver drinking cups. Many of the ornamental drinking glasses found in Pompeii are of the most elegant form, bearing evidence of a thorough knowledge and extensive practice of the art which produced them.

In the working and mixing of metals, the ancient Romans possessed great skill, and the art of inlaying one metal with another was much in repute amongst them. Silver ornaments were generally inlaid with gold, and bronze lamps and candelabra were on many occasions inlaid with silver ornaments. Among the numerous specimens of Roman art that remain to us, none are more curious than the lamps and candelabra. On these utensils the Romans seem to have lavished all their powers of fancy and invention, giving them the most graceful forms, and ornamenting them in the richest manner. The candelabra, indeed, were one of the most elegant articles of furniture in use, and were generally models of taste, in form, proportion, ornament, and execution. In many cases the type was preserved of the object from which the design had been taken, as in the case of the stem or reed, used in early times for raising the light to a convenient height. In such examples, the buds or shoots which adorn the shaft, in imitation of those on the original material, afford a firm grasp to the hand, shewing that the Romans well knew the art of making ornaments conduce to the utility of that which they served to adorn.

The manner in which the dining-room of a Roman noble was furnished, has been thus described by Mazois:—

'The walls, to a certain height, were ornamented with valuable hangings. Other portions were divided into compartments adorned with garlands of ivy and vine. Paintings, representing high festivals, were surrounded with Arabesque borders.

The apartment was lighted by bronze lamps, dependent from chains of the same material, or raised on richly wrought candelabra. Tables, made of citron-wood, rested on ivory feet, and were covered by a plate of silver, chased and carved with exquisite skill. Couches, which contained thirty persons, were made of bronze, overlaid with ornaments in silver, gold, and tortoise-shell, the cushions covered with stuffs woven and embroidered with silk mixed with threads of gold.'

Like all martial nations, the Romans bestowed much care upon their military costumes and implements of war, enriching them with every sort of appropriate ornaments their fancy could suggest. Their cuirasses, helmets, swords, and shields, were inlaid in the richest manner. Their war-chariots were models of elegance, and their horses were caparisoned with the richest trappings. The ornaments on the portion of the cuirass, here shown, combine the elements of the foliated and geometric designs of the Romans, and give an idea of the place the circle held in their ornamental decorations.

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## ON THE ORNAMENTAL ARTS OF THE ANCIENT INDIANS AND AMERICANS.

It will not be deemed irrelevant to an inquiry of this kind, to advert briefly to certain points of resemblance between the architectural and sculptural remains of ancient Egypt, India, and America, as well as to the similarity in the forms of vases and other articles of manufacture found in these distinct and widely separated countries. In the depths and solitudes of what were once believed to be the primeval forests of Central America, have recently been discovered huge pyramids, rivalling in extent those of Egypt; sculptural altars and idols ornamented in the most beauti-

ful and elaborate manner, and colossal heads closely approximating in magnitude and expression those of Egypt and India. In Peru, vases of ancient manufacture have been found, ornamented with the Vitruvian scroll and Grecque border; and, although we know not how these arts found their way in remote times from one distant nation to another, we cannot doubt, from the similarity in their leading features, that they had one common origin.

The similarity between the idols and altars of India and America is very remarkable. In both countries, the former are profusely adorned with trinkets and jewellery —the neck and bosom generally displaying double and triple rows of necklaces— from which, in many instances, are pendant brooches of immense size and beautiful form. The waist is encircled with richly embroidered sashes and belts, having tassels, fringes, and other ornamental appendages. The dress is frequently diapered with quatre-foils, and other geometric figures. From the ears depend rich and massive rings and drops; while the arms and wrists are adorned with bracelets, and the heads with lofty plumes of feathers. In all these points the stone idols of India and America approximate closely. But there are still other and more remarkable instances of resemblance. In the monuments of both countries the effigies are frequently seated in the Oriental fashion, and in both, also, do we find the principal figures of colossal size, while those of a subordinate character are of small dimensions. The personagès represented seem, in some cases, to be engaged in the ordinary business of life, but more frequently in the act of worshipping or amusing the idol to whose service they have been devoted. In all cases, whether merry or sad, tragical or comical, the feeling or sentiment desired to be pourtrayed, is faithfully expressed. The humour displayed in the grotesque attitudes of some of the figures is singularly forcible; while the death's-heads and cross-bones, with which our sepulchres were wont to be so profusely adorned, have their counterparts on the monuments of Central America.

A knowledge of geometry, and a love for geometrical decoration, seem to have prevailed both in India and America. We find in Dupaix's 'American Monuments,' an endless variety of circular designs cut in stone—the divisions being made in the planes of the circles in every conceivable variety, and being divided invariably according to geometric rules. The representation, No. 1, of a carved stone, from Dupaix's work, affords sufficient evidence of the existence of mathematical knowledge among the ancient Americans; while the representation, No. 2, of an ornamental

stone on the gateway at Dipaldinna at Amrawutty, shows that geometrical decoration was understood and practised by the ancient Indians.

No. 1.

No. 2.

In both of these examples, the circle is divided and subdivided in the most

scientific manner; the first exhibiting a strong resemblance to Moorish, the second to Grecian ornament.

There is one remarkable feature in those interesting relics recently discovered in America, which merits special attention. Even a cursory observer, in looking over the illustrations of the works of Dupaix or Stephens, must be struck with the strong resemblance which many of the ornaments have to the Elizabethan style of decoration. Many of these ornaments, had they been found in England, would have been claimed as beautiful specimens of that style, and will certainly bear comparison with the best ornamental forms of that period.

An inquiry, which might not be unprofitably followed out, suggests itself here. Might not the Elizabethan style have been founded on, or borrowed from the American? It seems not improbable that some of the English adventurers of that period, being struck with the novelty and beauty of the architecture of the New World, may have brought home drawings of the specimens they met with there; and to such circumstances the Elizabethan style of ornament, so full of wild and irregular fancies, may have been indebted for its origin. The desire for novelty in architecture and decoration at that time, amounted to a passion. The Church of Rome had become unpopular, and with it the beautiful style of architecture with which it was associated. Mr Stephens describes these American structures as full of symmetry and grandeur; and remarks of one at Uxmal, that if it stood on its artificial terrace in Hyde Park, or the garden of the Tuilleries, it would form a new order not unworthy to stand beside the remains of Egyptian, Grecian, and Roman art. If the general effect of these buildings was so imposing, and the ornamental detail similar to that generally termed Elizabethan, it is not improbable that we owe this style to America. By whom these ancient structures were raised, or at what period, is unknown, and will in all probability ever remain so. They must, however, have been built many centuries before that style of ornament was known in Europe.

The remains of the ancient structures of India and America afford conclusive evidence that the art of decorative painting had been extensively practised in adorning the buildings of both countries. In almost all the ancient Hindoo temples and pagodas, vestiges of gilding and colouring are still traceable; and Mr Catherwood, the artist who accompanied Mr Stephens on his interesting tour through America, on inspecting minutely the extensive ruins of Palenque and Uxmal, found that the

chief portions had been decorated in the most gorgeous manner, all the elaborate detail of the relieved ornament having been picked in with gold and colour.

The rich costume represented on the monuments of Hindostan and Yucatan, shows that those arts which administer to the elegancies and refinements of life had been extensively patronised and practised in both these countries; and perhaps some of the most interesting illustrations in Dupaix's work are those wherein jewellers, feather embroiderers, and other tradesmen, are seen engaged in their various avocations, their mode of working having been very similar to that practised by the workmen of the present day.

Having now given a brief account of the ornamental arts as practised by those nations of remote antiquity, from which the rudiments of many modern arts seem to have been derived, we proceed to offer a few remarks on the various styles of ornament which have recently been employed in decorative works; and, in doing so, we naturally begin with that invented by the Saracens or Moors, after the decline of the arts in Rome.

The Moorish style of decoration was extensively employed at an early period in Spain and the adjoining countries; and the principles on which it is based having been universally recognised as correct, the style itself has come into very general use in all countries where the decorative arts are cultivated. This style seems, on the whole, best adapted for decorating the ceilings, walls, floors, and wainscoting of buildings. It presents harmonious combinations of geometrical figures, with happy arrangements of rich and exuberant foliage. It makes no attempt at deception, in so far as inequality of surface is concerned; the raised or sunk portions of the ornament being on a level, and the decorations depending mainly for their effect on harmonious combination of line, and judicious balancing of colour. The leading lines, however complicated, are always harmonious; and although rectilineal, angular, circular, and irregular figures, as well as every variety of foliage, are frequently introduced into the same composition, the relation which every part bears to another has been so well understood and considered by the designer, that the whole seems to have been the result of one conception, at once instantaneous and perfect. The colouring of the ancient specimens of this style also shows, on the part of the artist, a thorough acquaintance with those principles developed in the works of nature. Hence we find, that those portions intended to be brought prominently forward, either to enhance some point, or to give effect to

the general design, have been gilded or painted in light colours, while those meant to appear of less importanee have been painted in gradations of tints and colours; the former heightened with brilliant leaf-gold, the latter sobered down to dusky purple.

Here we cannot help adverting to what we consider one of the finest features in this style of ornament, namely, the uniform and entire absence in these designs of the human figure, and of all animal life. Demi-figures springing from foliage, centaurs, mermaids, and other nondescripts, so frequently introdueed into the grotesques of the Romans and Italians, and whieh are still frequently used in modern decorations, we cannot help regarding as a barbarism, obnoxious to the prineiples of pure taste, and to right feeling. The vegetable world abounds with varieties of beautiful forms, suseeptible of exeiting the purest feelings, and suggestive of endlessly diversified design; thus presenting at once an inexhaustible and unobjectionable source of original and graceful ornament. Those nations that havc exeelled in the ornamental arts have eolleeted the materials of their first and purest eompositions from favourite plants and flowers, the legitimate source of decorative design. The Moors, therefore, excelled in this department of art, by combining an intimate knowledge of geometrieal lines and figures, with a high appreeiation of the beautiful in nature; employing the former in traeing the leading features of designs, and the latter, in the shape of leaves and flowers, in filling up the detail.

Several of the plates in this work show adaptations of the Moorish style to various arts, sueh as bookbinding, metal easting, &c.; and when it bccomes more generally understood, there can be little doubt it will be more extensively used and appreciated in others of the decorative arts. For paper-hangings, for instanee, there eannot be a more appropriate style than the flat eonfiguration of Moorish ornament, filled in with positive eolours, and defined by decided outline. Many speeimens of paper-hangings, whieh have been admired for their skilful manipulation and delieate blending of eolour, appear *petit* and out of plaee in large apartments. The attempts so frequently made in sueh cases to represent a repetition of small bouquets of flowers is injudicious, and suggests ideas of meanness and vulgarity. A more legitimate kind of ornament for the walls of rooms can searcely be eoneeived than well balanced geometrical eombinations of leading forms, relieved by foliage, the configuration of which has been carefully copied from nature, and which eannot be too homely nor too familiar. In this way, by following the example of the

Moors, every nation may be able to establish a style of decoration peculiar to itself, because drawn from its peculiar sources, and fraught, at the same time, with the most pleasing and delightful associations.

In concluding these remarks on the Moorish style of decoration, it may be mentioned, that in the palace of the Alhambra, founded in the thirteenth century, the ceilings were richly stuccoed and ornamented with arabesques of exquisite beauty, which had been cast and fitted into each other so accurately, that the joinings could not be detected by the eye. The walls were covered with mosaics of similar character; and the furniture was made of citron, sandal, and aloe woods, inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl, intermixed with burnished gold and cerulean blue; vases of costly and curious workmanship were formed of porcelain, rock crystal, mosaic and sardonyx; and the whole of the furnishings and decoratians of this wonderful palace show that the ornamental arts had been as thoroughly understood and practised by the Moors as ever they were at any period of the world's history with which we are acquainted.

The Gothic style of ornament comes naturally to be considered after that of the Moors, to which, in some of its features, it bears considerable resemblance. Previously to doing so, however, it seems requisite to advert to one peculiarity in the style of embellishment adopted at an early period in the churches of Byzantia; a style from which much that is excellent in Gothic ornament has been borrowed, and on which the Moorish mode of decoration was originally founded.

When Christianity was first embraced by the Roman emperors, the Pagan relics of antiquity, consisting of sculptures, bronzes, and pictures, were destroyed, and all attempts to introduce such decorations into churches were strictly prohibited. In Rome, however, which contained many of these ancient Pagan relics, this Iconoclastic order was not obeyed, and hence the division of the early Christians into the Greek and Latin churches. At length some tangible symbols of religious faith were desiderated at Constantinople, and effigies of saints or martyrs, or symbolic figures belonging to some holy persons, or symbolic pictures relating to some of the attributes of Christianity, in mosaic work, of marble, enamel, or coloured glass, were executed on the walls of the Byzantine churches. This soon became popular, and the symbolism thus invented spread with great rapidity among the early Christians, and continued to be used through succeeding ages in all the modifications of ecclesiastical architecture. The cross, the palm branch, the eagle, the dove, the lamb, the fish,

and other emblems in the calendar of the Church of Rome were all originally introduced by the Byzantines into the Mosaics of their churches—the entire absence of sculptured effigies from the latter constituting the chief difference between the decorations of the Greek and the Latin Churches.

The ornamental decorations connected with the Gothic style of architecture are characterised by every variety of geometrical combination, and enriched by the most perfect imitation of natural leaves and foliage. No style of architecture can boast of more varied excellencies; no style of ornament is characterised by more exuberant fancy, correct taste, and delicacy of execution. Every ornament in the pointed structures of the best period was pregnant with meaning, every enrichment full of design; and, from the golden vane that glittered on the summit of the spire, to the tesselated pavement that adorned the floor, every portion of the ornamental detail was in perfect harmony, each and all tending to enhance the general effect, which was at once gorgeous and overpowering.

On examining the progress of Gothic ornamental design, it is easy to trace its gradual advancement from imitations of existing models to original adaptations, and combinations from nature and from geometry. Most of the ornamental mouldings used in Norman structures, were borrowed either from Ancient Rome or from specimens existing at that period in France and Lombardy. Those sculptured wreaths of the bay, the vine, and the ivy, found in the early Norman churches, have a close resemblance to similar devices used in the decorations of Ancient Rome; and the grotesque heads on the blocks and corbels of some of the early Norman structures had been previously prevalent in France and Italy.

In the ornamental decorations of the early English, or primary pointed style, we find a new feature introduced—namely, the use of simple geometric figures in connexion with natural foliage. Four-leaved flowers are displayed on square panels. Circular spaces are filled with trefoils and quatrefoils; while the foliage on the capitals, and the crockets running along the edges of spires or pinnacles, bear evidence that it has been imitated, although somewhat clumsily, from nature. In the decorated and perpendicular styles of Gothic, we have an endless variety of geometric combinations, and a profusion of natural foliage, skilfully and delicately carved—the natural form of the plant or leaf imitated being closely followed in every instance, and every peculiarity minutely and carefully delineated. The oak, the ivy, the vine, and the fern, together with the leaf of the dock and parsley, were sculptured with

wonderful fidelity, and introduced with the most felicitous effect; the value of these representations of homely objects being more readily felt and appreciated than delineations of leaves, plants, and flowers of foreign production. Nothing in the whole range of ornamental art is finer than the free combinations of soft luxuriant foliage with which the chief points of these Gothic structures were adorned. Crockets, pinnacles, finials, capitals, bosses and pendants, were all directly copied from nature.

The ornaments were also selected with singular taste, and arranged with great judgment. So judiciously, indeed, were they distributed, that a celebrated writer has remarked, that 'the ornaments, although profusely used, might have been left out, without impairing the general effect of the building.' In connexion with these skilful adaptations from nature, the structures of the period alluded to were enriched by an endless variety of geometric figures, such as circles, trefoils, quatrefoils, cinquefoils, &c., suggesting ideas of correct construction and symmetrical harmony. In the proportions of these beautiful edifices, in the groinings of the ceilings, in the tracery of the windows, in the symmetry of the shafts and columns, and in the enrichments of mouldings, capitals, string-courses, niches, and canopies, we find the combination of geometrical forms with natural foliage constantly occurring, and with the most admirable effect. Such specimens, therefore, yield abundant proof, that when a designer's taste is regulated by the first principles of proportion, he cannot draw too largely from the great storehouse of nature. Let him first learn to produce a symmetrical form, and then study how to enrich it with befitting adornment.

In the colouring of Gothic decorations, the positive colours were invariably used in their fullest intensity, and with the richest and most harmonious effects. Sometimes they were used sparingly, at others profusely; the structure glowing, from floor to ceiling, with red, blue, and gold. The painted glass in the windows gave the key-note to the general harmony, and its power and brilliancy required that the walls, ceilings, and floors, should either be studded or entirely covered over with the most vivid colours. This necessity doubtless suggested the introduction of those ornamental tiles, so many specimens of which have been from time to time discovered in ancient Gothic churches, and the manufacture of which is now carried on so extensively in England. In the colouring of the ornamental decorations, care was always taken that prominence should be given to the chief points and features of the edifice, the receding and minor portions being painted in subdued tints, or in a

less obtrusive manner; and the decorators seem to have worked on similar principles with those formerly adverted to in connexion with the arabesques of the Alhambra, and other Moorish decorations.

All the leading forms used in Gothic ornaments had a symbolic reference. The trefoil and equilateral triangle, for example, were emblems of the Trinity; and when inclosed within a circle, the Trinity and Unity of Deity was referred to. Emblems and monograms were also much in use. The cross was introduced every where, and decorated in every conceivable manner; and monograms and emblems, having reference to the three persons in the Godhead, were largely employed. On the furniture of the churches, as well as on the robes, mitres, and croziers of the priests, similar devices were repeated; and the chief aim of all these splendid ecclesiastical decorations was, to place continually before the eye signs or embodiments of the leading and peculiar features of the Christian faith. In the palaces and mansions of that period, the ornaments are also full of appropriate emblems and symbols. The heraldic blazon of the noble families to whom they belonged always forms a prominent feature; and the entire system of Gothic decoration may with propriety be termed an extended and comprehensive system of heraldry.

The illuminated missals of the Middle Ages are characterised by much that is beautiful, in form and colour, in design and execution. Nothing can be conceived more delicately elaborated than some of these exquisite productions. Always teeming with thought, and pregnant with meaning, there is no source from which a designer can derive more benefit, than from these storehouses of design.

The gradual blending of the castle with the mansion, which took place in the reigns of the latter Henrys, led to a demand for ornamental decorations in connexion with domestic architecture, which had never previously obtained in England, and which at length produced those comfortable and highly-ornamental mansion-houses, known by the term Elizabethan.

In the reign of Elizabeth, the nobility and gentry vied with each other in the erection of splendid and profusely decorated mansions; and although these decorations are not always characterised by harmonic proportion, they display great fertility of invention, and have a picturesque effect, which renders them exceedingly attractive.

The complexity of form and enrichment in Elizabethan ornament is very remarkable, rendering it extremely difficult to discover on what principles it was

based. It combines a greater variety of leading forms than any other school of decoration; and several of its features seem to have been selected from a variety of foreign styles, and to have been grafted on the home-bred Tudor, which immediately preceded its introduction. The chief portions of the architecture, however, are peculiarly English; and although most of the mouldings are Roman,* the pendants, pinnacles, and ceilings are essentially Gothic in their leading features, while the ornamental window-tops and brick chimneys were features in the street architecture of that period not found any where but in England.

At an early stage of Elizabethan architecture, heraldic badges were adopted as leading ornaments; and the rose, thistle, fleur-de-lis, and pomegranate, are very freely used, either as central points to window-tops, or as finials to the pedimented fronts of that period. Grotesque and scroll shields, containing armorial bearings, were also much in use; and on the scroll turnings of the shield, pinnacles were frequently perched, while at other times they projected in all directions from the various angles of similar ornaments. Pinnacles are possessed of great variety of form; the most characteristic are perforated, and bound round the centre with fillets. Elizabethan scrolls are generally imitations of paper or parchment scrolls, half unrolled; and, when used for the ground-work of shields, their effect in light and shadow is picturesque and powerful.

In Elizabethan ornament, lines are to be found at every degree of obliquity. Oblong squares and angular diamonds are often placed in rows, relieved, surrounded, or bound together by trefoliated or zig-zag borderings, which are to be met with in every conceivable variety and combination. Squares, ellipses, circles, and right-angled figures are inlaid or surrounded with bands and garters, which are either perforated or interlaced, or appear to be fixed on with bolt-heads of various shapes and sizes, sometimes resembling bosses, sometimes square or octagonal nail heads. The ellipse is very frequently used as a centre, surrounded with scroll-work, and studded with numerous bolts, which, when used even in stone-work, suggest the idea of timber framing, morticed and bolted together. Jewels and precious stones are also copiously imitated, both in carving and colouring; and in some instances this is carried to such an extent, that the entire detail of the ornament seems an imitation of jewellery.

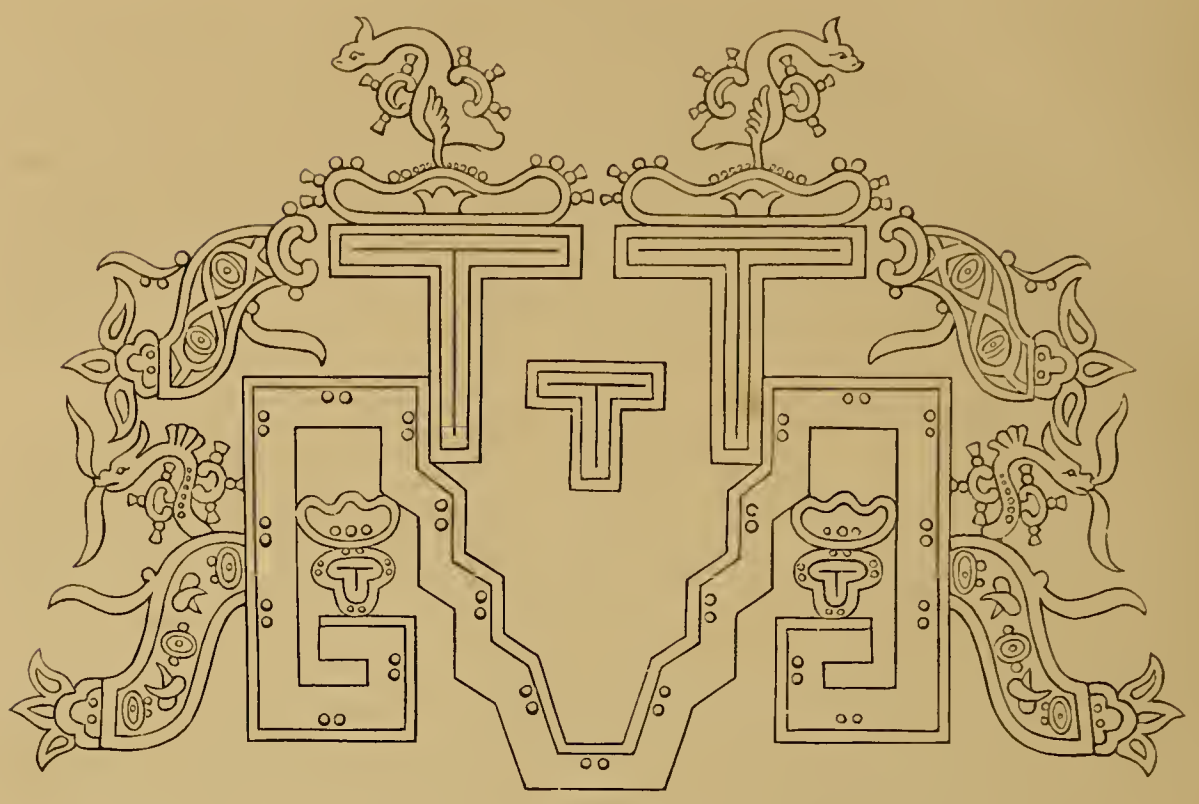
* The egg-and-dart moulding of the Elizabethan style is little removed from that of the Roman.

Elizabethan ceilings are pannelled in every conceivable manner, richly moulded, with an immense number of angles; and in many of the richly carved oak ceilings of that style, a great variety of geometrical figures are apparent, although in arrangement and proportion they are deficient in that harmony and symmetry for which Moorish and Gothic decorations are remarkable. Soffits, and corbels or brackets have generally a rich perforated effect, and the backgrounds of many pannels and pilasters, which are enriched by fret or scroll ornament, are pierced with small holes, which gives the ground a frosted appearance, and by contrast, renders the ornament more effective.

The intermixed, perforated, and bolted ornaments, found in the window-tops of Elizabethan mansions, are sufficiently eccentric, and are chiefly composed of scrolls and volutes, joined by horizontal, perpendicular, and angular bars, with jewelled centres, surmounted with pinnacles, and interlaced with laurel or flowers. The intertwining of the different members, in such cases, gives the ornament a soft and plastic effect which is exceedingly agreeable.

All sorts of quaint devices, generally finished in the most elaborate manner, are to be found in the carvings of that period. Grotesque heads, satyrs, and other nondescripts, are frequently introduced, the effect of which is sufficiently graphic; investing the design with a conversational character perhaps not otherwise attainable. Still, however, such expedients are questionable, suggesting incongruous and discordant associations.

It has been frequently asserted, that the Elizabethan style of ornament has been produced by a blending of the Italian with the Tudor,—and we have already admitted that in the former there are some features undeniably Italian; but we still incline to believe that the trifoliated and tasselled terminations, with other peculiarities observable throughout Elizabethan designs, had been originally imported from Central America, and a careful perusal of the works already adverted to, in connexion with the recent discoveries in that interesting country, will, we think, go far to produce a general conviction that many of the details in Elizabethan ornament are founded on the examples found in ancient America. The following example from Dupaix' work on New Spain will show that this opinion has not been formed without due consideration.



The ornamental decorations of Italy have been long and deservedly held in high estimation. They are at once elegant and lively, and harmonize well with those elegancies of life found among a lively and refined people. Italian ornament combines many of the beauties of the ornamental decorations of ancient Greece and Rome, and without aiming at classical simplicity or symmetrical proportion, is flowing and luxuriant. It is composed chiefly of leaves, tendrils, and flowers; and nothing can be finer than the foliated scrolls on the friezes,—the pateras or roses on the ceilings,—or the enrichments on the cornices of Italian apartments. Angles are rarely found in these compositions, their leading features consisting chiefly of ovoid and circular curves. Figures are frequently introduced into the foliated scroll ornamented friezes, and are generally represented sportively engaged in some game, playfully twisting and twining the leaves and tendrils, or concealing themselves among the foliage or flowers; and in all such examples, the design is graceful, and the effect exceedingly pleasing. The pateras or roses—of which several specimens are given in this work—are characterised by great richness and variety,—the leaves, like those in Gothic pendants or bosses, are plastic and natural—the flowers rich

and varied. Ceilings, walls, and doors are panelled in the most elegant and fanciful manner, and these panels are enriched by every variety of arabesque, historical, and characteristic painting. Domes, cones, and soffits are embellished in the most gorgeous manner; and every portion of the interiors of Italian villas are furnished as well as decorated in a manner evincing a high state of social refinement, and a high degree of artistic excellence.

There can be no doubt that the introduction of the Italian style of architecture into England by Jones, and its cultivation afterwards by Wren, tended to refine the taste and elevate the artistic feeling of the country. Many of our fine modern mansions and palaces are in this style, and a large proportion of the beautiful balconies, balustrades, window-tops, and door-pieces, which adorn these structures, are admirable, both in conception and execution. Like the Elizabethan, which immediately preceded its introduction, the Italian style admits of almost every variety of design, and is therefore attractive to artists of inventive genius, who prefer following the dictates of fancy to obeying the stern injunctions of rule. We find, accordingly, that it has always been a favourite with painters; the divine Raphael himself not deeming it unworthy of his genius to execute the ornamental decorations on the walls of the Vatican. The celebrated work recently published by Gruner, gives a vivid idea of the rich and harmonious colouring with which the interiors of Italian palaces are adorned, and may be perused with much profit by those whose tame and insipid taste would banish every thing like colour from the walls and ceilings of our apartments.

The arabesque or grotesque style of decoration anciently practised in Rome, and afterwards imitated by Raphael, is generally associated with Italian art, and, notwithstanding its incongruities, paintings of high merit, in conception and execution, are often found intermingling with its playful combinations. Vitruvius, who appears to have taken a correct view of the matter, thus describes it: — 'Nothing is now represented on walls but monsters, instead of true and natural objects. In place of columns there are slender reeds, and temples are supported on mere nothingness. Demi-figures spring from flowers—some with human faces, others with the heads of beasts; all things which never have, or ever can be. Such designs are not to be esteemed, inasmuch as they are not consonant to nature and reason.'

There is great force and truth in these remarks, and they are as applicable

to some of the decorations recently executed in our own country, as they were to those in the time of Vitruvius.

Italian ornament, whether in marble, stone, plaster, or painting, in bas relief, or in alto relief, always aims at complete deception; and this, together with the harmonious flow of line and balance of colour, by which the interior decorations of Italian structures are pervaded, always renders them pleasing. Even when monstrosities are introduced, and the detail made up of the most unnatural combinations, the colouring is so rich, containing every tint from the deepest purple to the brightest gold; the light and massive portions of the composition are so gracefully linked together, that the effect is always agreeable, and although the Æsthetic taste may be offended, the eye is invariably delighted.

By way of introduction to a brief notice of the French style of ornament, which is an offshoot of the Italian, it may here be mentioned that if ever any grotesques were to be admired, they were those of Watteau, whose lively designs, and elegant compositions, have obtained the admiration of all nations. No painter, perhaps, ever combined nature and art so gracefully,—rendered extravagance so pleasing,—or laid such a variety of objects under contribution to effect his purposes. Rocks and mountains, hills and valleys, streams and waterfalls, trees, plants, leaves and flowers, trophies of peace and war, scenes of rustic merriment and of courtly pageant, diversified by scenes of touching pathos or broad humour, make up his delightful compositions. Take it all in all, we know no style better suited for boudoir or arbour decorations than the charming compositions of Watteau, and his success in that department shows that no artist, whatever be his standing, ought to consider the decorative art beneath him. It seems an admirable field for the exercise of genius, and genius can at any and at all times invest it with the attributes of high art;—grace, dignity, and expression. Many of the modern French decorators are artists of eminence; and the decorations of palaces, theatres, and public buildings in France, are remarkable for beautiful and appropriate design, as well as for rich and harmonious colouring. And why, it may be asked, should not British artists do so likewise? They have established a school of high art, no unworthy rival to that of France, and why should they not endeavour to equal them in this more useful though perhaps more humble department of art?

The leading character and general detail of the French style of ornament may be described very briefly. It is much more irregular than the Italian, and full of

quaint conceits and devices. Angles and curves, of every possible kind, are found thrown together without method or arrangement, and pannels are met with of the most irregular form, and in many instances without correspondence or balance between the opposite sides. Flowers, fruits, animals, and landscapes, are introduced into these irregular spaces, which again are surrounded and surmounted with flowing and redundant ornament. Yet, strange as it may appear, notwithstanding this want of rule, of balance, and of consistency, the effect of these compositions is generally pleasing; nay, in many cases, the greater the contrast between what is termed in a regular design the ballancing portions, the more striking is the general effect. All sorts of volutes, scrolls, shells, foliage and figures, are introduced into the French style of ornament, and the centre points are frequently composed of shells half covered with foliage, suggesting a similar idea to that of the Acanthus and the basket in the Corinthian capital. Fish scale, lattice-work, and eccentric curved panneling, are also much used in brackets, tables, shields, &c. The bodies of some designs are ribbed, others perforated, others composed of shells, others of flowers and fruit. In the arrangement of the different members, every liberty is taken, and in some cases the various portions of detail may be cut asunder, and re-arranged in various ways. If they are well drawn and contrasted, the effect is invariably agreeable.

In colouring, the French are not so outré as is generally imagined. The Cafés in Paris, exhibit in many instances, specimens of chaste simplicity, both in design and colouring. It is well-known, moreover, that white heightened with gold, was first introduced in connection with the French style of decoration; and there can be but one opinion of the delightful effect produced by that light and beautiful combination. In drawing-room furniture, the French style has been extensively adopted, and the drawing-room or boudoir seems its legitimate place. It appears, however, an incongrous association, when we find mirror-frames, candelabras, couches, chairs, tables, books, curtains and carpets, rejoicing in the fantastic forms and gay colours of "La Belle France," in juxtaposition with the architectural ornaments and details of classic Grecce.

We have now, as originally purposed, given a brief account of the nature and peculiarities of the various modes of embellishment and styles of decoration invented and practised by different nations; and, while recommending certain features and principles which seemed worthy of imitation, we have endeavoured to impress upon

the ornamental designer, the propriety of looking to Nature herself as the great primal source of all beauty.

It was also originally intended to have entered into a careful examination of the present state of the ornamental arts, in connection with the manufacture of articles of dress, of furniture, and of vertù, as well as with the decorations of public structures and private dwellings, both externally and internally. As this important inquiry, however, could not be comprised within the limits to which this work is restricted for the present, it has been deemed advisable to reserve it for another occasion, and, in the meantime, to conclude this essay with a few general remarks and practical hints, which may be found useful to those for whom this publication is specially intended.

On looking at the productions of Nature, we find them exhibiting every variety of colour and design. The grey crag has its green moss or verdant lichens, the mountain its purple heath, the bough of the tree its glossy foliage, and the banks of the stream its wild flowers; showing the constant propensity of nature to beautify and adorn, and suggesting, at the same time, how much ornamental detail enhances the attractions of the most symmetrical works of art.

The decorative arts, then, are evidently founded in Nature, and from her storehouse we must draw the materials for their development. In this, however, as well as in the higher departments of art, the artist will be enabled to produce more original, as well as more elegant designs, by being intimately conversant with these works, which have been long and generally admired. The decorator ought, then, in the first place, to make himself familiar with the various styles of embellishment, and afterwards endeavour to obtain a clear idea of the elements of symmetrical proportion, as applicable to ornamental composition. This knowledge may be attained in various ways, but is by no means so easily acquired as is generally imagined. Some writers recommend the study of geometry for this purpose; others, a close and diligent application to Nature, asserting that in flowers and plants may be found all the elements of beauty and harmony. We should say that both are necessary, and that the progress of the artist will be materially facilitated if, while studying Nature and geometry, he makes careful observation of the approved models of antiquity. In treating of geometry in connection with symmetrical proportion, writers have differed widely, some giving the preference to one figure and some to another. The ellipse, however, seems now most generally preferred, and its importance in orna-

mental design is now universally acknowledged. Our own opinion, as expressed in another treatise connected with art,* is, that the preference of the ellipse to the circle evinces an advanced stage of refinement, as evidenced by the prevalence of ovoid curves in Egyptian and Grecian architecture, as well as in the celebrated vases of Etruria. The circle is generally preferred by man in his primitive state; but, after a careful examination of the productions of Nature, he becomes sensible of the prevalence of the ellipse in every branch of the animal and vegetable kingdoms. However circular their arrangements may be, the petals of all flowers and the leaves of all plants are elliptic; and hence the introduction of the ellipse into ornamental compositions always produces a pleasing effect.

Perhaps, however, the most important element in symmetrical arrangement in ornamental composition, is the relation which one form bears to another in harmonic proportion, and the capabilities different forms possess of being harmoniously arranged and classified. For example, the square and the circle, or the rhomb and ellipse, always make a harmonious combination; but if a square be placed beside an ellipse, or a circle beside a rhomb, there is a discordant or inharmonious arrangement. Extend this principle to other forms, and you have a pretty accurate idea of the leading principles of proportion—a knowledge without which egregious blunders are committed, even by artists of undoubted talent.

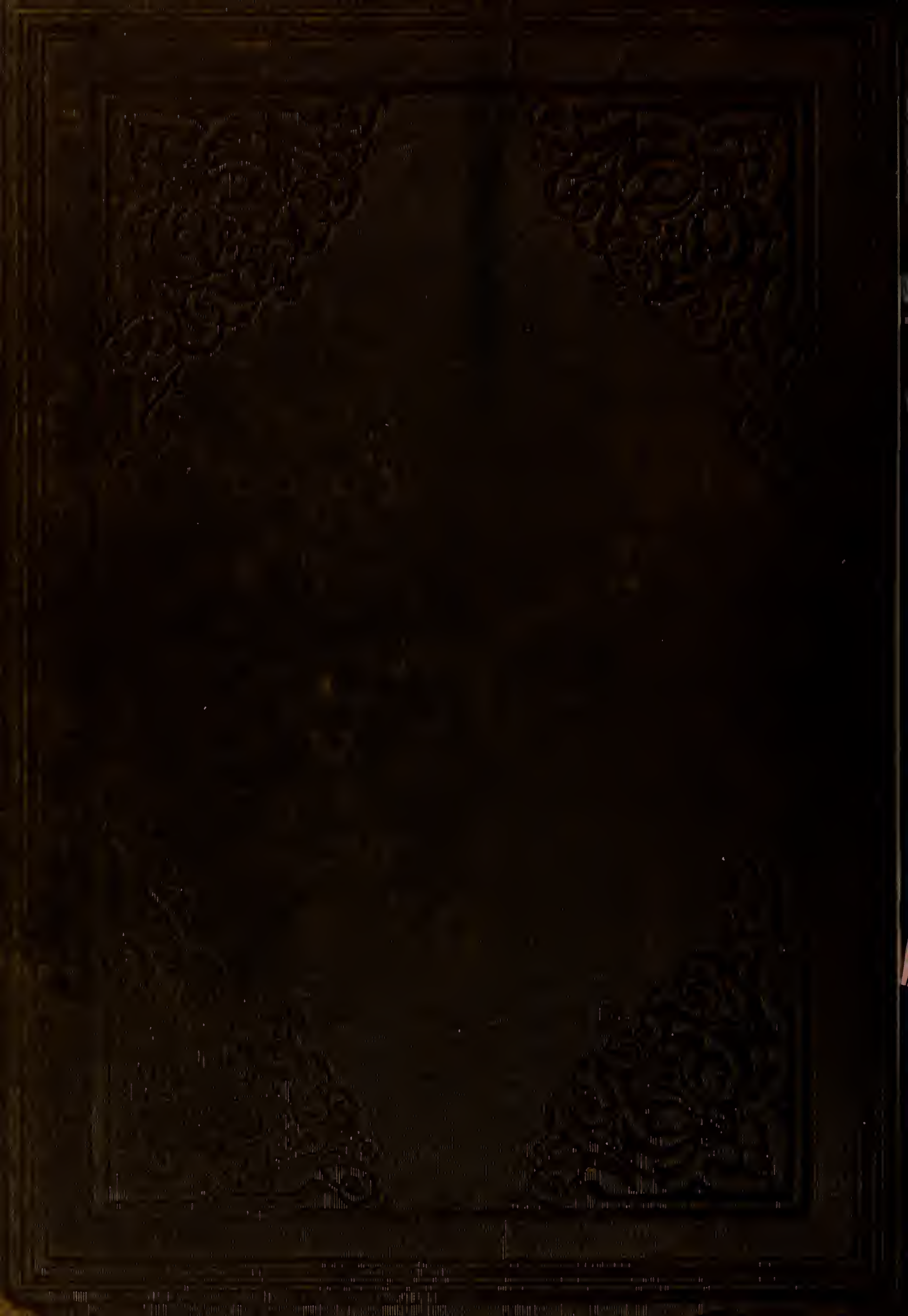
After a symmetrical leading form has been obtained, the ornamental decorations with which it is to be adorned ought to be carefully considered. If the detail be crude, inharmonious, or incongruous, the faults are rendered more apparent in consequence of their contrast to the symmetry of the general design. A form composed of elliptic or ovoid curves, suggests elliptic or ovoid leaves; a form composed of circular curves is suggestive of circular arrangements; while an angular form suggests trifoliated or quatrefoliated ornament. This combination is to ornament what composition is to a picture. Without it, there is no concentration, no unity, and the entire sentiment and conception is broken and disjointed.

It ought also to be remembered, that a balance of straight and curved lines is indispensable in every extensive work of ornamental decoration. The one enhances the other in value. The finest forms in Nature are composed of similar combinations;

* Treatise on Painted Glass, showing its applicability to every style of Architecture, by James Ballantine. London, Chapman and Hall; Edinburgh, John Menzies.

and without such contrasts, the general effect of ornamental designs is tame and insipid. Variety, as well as regularity, is requisite in all symmetrical compositions.

A knowledge of botany is indispensable to the ornamental designer. He ought not only to be familiar with the form and colour of the different plants and flowers, but he ought also to be acquainted with their nature and qualities, and he will thus be enabled to avoid those incongruous associations of poisonous weeds and healthy flowers which we find often marring otherwise good designs. The trophies of war are no longer in repute as emblematic decorations, their place being now happily supplied by more agreeable objects—by fruits, flowers, plants, and other productions of Nature, suggestive of peaceful and pleasing thoughts, and the aim of the decorator ought to be, to foster and encourage this improved and improving taste.

Winckleman has observed, that 'the first grand style of the arts consisted of a system of rules borrowed from Nature alone. Afterwards artists plunged into the ideal, and, having abandoned truth in their forms, worked after the adopted style rather than Nature.'

To this it may be added, that the main use of studying other styles, and making ourselves acquainted with their peculiarities, is to learn that Nature and simplicity are the leading characteristics of the most approved specimens of the works of antiquity. To copy them without knowing and feeling this truth, is to perform a merely mechanical process, from which no useful improvement can result. There can be no good reason, in a country like this, where a love of home is so prevalent, and where the beauties of nature are so abundant, that our dwellings should be adorned with an indiscriminate and slavish adaptation of the ornamental embellishments of other times and other countries. Hogarth and Wilkie drew their inspiration from Nature; and hence that truthfulness of delineation in which their great excellence consists, and for which they have obtained universal approbation. While, therefore, the decorative artist appreciates the excellence of the ornamental designs of other times and countries, he must eventually go to the fountain-head—to Nature. By no other means need he hope to attain the paramount excellence of all art—originality.